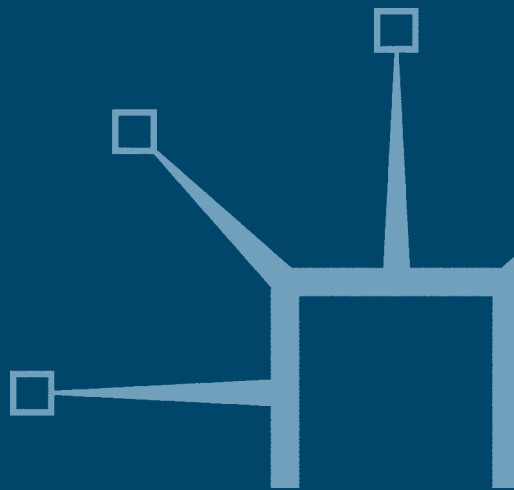


palgrave
macmillan

RACISM IN EUROPE 1870–2000

Neil MacMaster



RACISM IN EUROPE

European Culture and Society
General Editor: Jeremy Black

Published

Lesley Hall *Sex, Gender & Social Change in Britain since 1880*
Neil MacMaster *Racism in Europe, 1870–2000*
W. M. Spellman *European Political Thought 1600–1700*

European Culture and Society Series

Series Standing Order

ISBN 0-333-74440-3

(outside North America only)

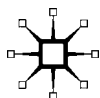
You can receive future titles in this series as they are published by placing a standing order. Please contact your bookseller or, in case of difficulty, write to us at the address below with your name and address, the title of the series and the ISBN quoted above.

Customer Services Department, Macmillan Distribution Ltd
Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS, England

RACISM IN EUROPE 1870–2000

Neil MacMaster

palgrave



© Neil MacMaster 2001

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

No paragraph of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written permission or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, or under the terms of any licence permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency, 90 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 0LP.

Any person who does any unauthorised act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

The author has asserted his right to be identified as the author of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

First published 2001 by
PALGRAVE

Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS and
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010

Companies and representatives throughout the world

PALGRAVE is the new global academic imprint of
St. Martin's Press LLC Scholarly and Reference Division and
Palgrave Publishers Ltd (formerly Macmillan Press Ltd).

ISBN 0-333-71119-x hardback

ISBN 0-333-71120-3 paperback

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and
made from fully managed and sustained forest sources.

A catalogue record for this book is available
from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

MacMaster, Neil, 1945-

Racism in Europe, 1870-2000/Neil MacMaster.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-333-71119-X—ISBN 0-333-71120-3 (pbk.)

1. Racism—Europe—History—19th century. 2. Racism—Europe—
History—20th century. 3. Europe—Race relations. 4. Europe—Ethnic
relations. 5. Social Darwinism—History—19th century. I. Title.

D372 .M33 2001

305.8'0094—dc21

2001019446

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

10 09 08 07 06 05 04 03 02 01

Printed in Hong Kong

CONTENTS

<i>Acknowledgement</i>	viii
Introduction: The Roots of Modern Racism	1
Some General Considerations	1
The Origins of a Science of 'Race'	12
Racism, Modernity and the 1870 Turning-Point	20
PART 1	
1870–1914	
1 The White Race: Degeneration and Eugenics	31
Race and Degeneration	33
Social Darwinism	34
The Social Darwinism of Ernst Haeckel	38
Warfare and Colonial Conquest	40
Race and the Eugenic Movement	41
Eugenics, Race and Motherhood	46
Race, Sport and National Fitness	47
The Influence of Social Darwinism and Eugenics	48
2 Blackness Without Blacks	58
Stereotypes and Race	58
European Expansion Overseas, Slavery and Anti-Black Racism	60
The Growth of Anti-Black Racism from <i>c.</i> 1870	63
The Partition of Africa and Racism	66
The Black Presence in Europe	69
Exhibiting Blacks in Europe	73

Mass Culture and Race	78
Anti-Black Racism in Germany	81
3 The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism	86
Anti-Semitism as Ideology	87
Economic Anti-Semitism	89
Religious Anti-Semitism	90
Degeneration and Anti-Semitism	92
Nationalism and Anti-Semitism	93
Scientific Racism and Anti-Semitism	94
Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria	98
Anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe	103
Anti-Semitism in Britain and France	109
PART 2	
1914–1945	
4 Anti-Black Racism in an Age of Total War	117
Black Soldiers and Workers, 1914–18	117
Demobilization and Inter-War Racism	122
Fear of Miscegenation in Britain and France	124
Fear of Miscegenation in Germany	128
Race War and the ‘Horror on the Rhine’	129
The Nazis and Anti-Black Racism	132
Italian Fascism and Anti-Black Racism	134
Inter-War Mass Culture and Racism	135
5 Anti-Semitism in the Nazi Era	140
The Rise of the Nazi Movement	141
Racism in Hitler’s <i>Mein Kampf</i>	143
Eugenics, Medical Science and the Nazi Racial State	149
Anti-Semitic Repression and the German Public	152
Anti-Semitism in Poland	155
Anti-Semitism in Fascist Italy	158
Anti-Semitism in France	159
Anti-Semitism in Hungary	162
Anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union	163

PART 3**1945–2000**

6 Racism in the Age of Labour Immigration, 1945–1974	169
The Attack on the Science of ‘Race’	170
Post-War Labour Immigration and Racism	172
Immigration and Racial Politics in Britain	177
Immigration and Racial Politics in France	183
7 The ‘New Racism’ and National-Populism	190
The ‘New Racism’	193
The Rise of National-Populism	198
Racism: The Ambiguities of Mainstream Parties	200
Racism in Post-Communist Eastern Europe	205
Conclusion: Black and Jew	209
The Two Racisms	209
‘Fortress Europe’ and Racism	217
Institutional Racism	218
Genetics and Cloning: The Revival of Race-Science?	219
<i>Notes</i>	225
<i>A Short Guide to Further Reading</i>	235
<i>Index</i>	242

3

THE RISE OF POLITICAL ANTI-SEMITISM

Some historians perceive hatred of the Jews to be an ‘eternal’ racism that, in spite of minor shifts in its formulation, can be traced back over two millennia as a central and abiding component of European culture. While such lines of continuity certainly can be found (for example in the mythical view of the Jew as deicide) what such an essentializing approach tends to overlook is the extent to which anti-Jewish prejudice itself changed radically according to the historic context. How a Catholic artisan and guildsman of fourteenth-century Toledo or Prague, situated within a feudal and pre-industrial age, looked toward his Jewish neighbours was grounded in a total world-view that was quite unlike the perceptions of a factory worker of the late nineteenth century, living within a capitalist and secular age. Through the many centuries of European history, long phases of quite stable and relatively unchanging anti-Jewish patterns of prejudice can be contrasted with more dramatic watersheds or short periods of crisis, when the traditional archetypes have tended to fragment under stress and pass through a major restructuring and reformulation, before those new ways of seeing, in turn, became stable and enduring. Such a point of transition emerged during the 1870s and gave rise to a type of anti-Semitic racism that was to remain dominant in its new formulations down to the present.

This transformation can be analysed as a shift from a centuries-old *anti-Judaism*, that was fundamentally religious in meaning and ‘pre-modern’, to a new *anti-Semitism* that, in keeping with a secular age, constructed Jewish difference through the biological and naturalizing categories of racial science. However, the racialization of anti-Jewish discourse, the

adoption by propagandists of a scientific language of difference, was one element within a complex ideology that was essentially an expression of the anti-modernist and anti-democratic sentiments of social groups faced with crisis (conservative Christians, decaying aristocratic landowners, the *petite bourgeoisie*, small shopkeepers and artisans in decline) and which integrated a vast range of concerns, from xenophobia and radical nationalism to nostalgia for the passing of a traditional rural order. Anti-Semitism as a form of racism can only be made sense of if it is placed within this broader context.

This chapter is divided into two parts: firstly, anti-Semitism is considered as an *ideology* that was formulated, primarily through print, by propagandists, writers, politicians, academics and other members of the educated élite. This generalized form of ideological anti-Semitism, like other currents of race science, could be found right across Europe and sharing the same basic themes and constructions, regardless of the specific national, social, economic and political contexts. The second part then examines the social and political forms of anti-Semitism and the extent to which the ideological formulations filtered down and influenced the attitudes and behaviour of a wider public. Here, we need to look more closely at the specific national contexts. Since the general processes of modernization (from industrialization and urbanization to banking and agrarian reform) and the related crises of transformation varied enormously across Europe, so did the national and regional contexts within which anti-Semitism took root. The question of the varying national formulations of anti-Semitism and the depth of their impact on society from the 1870s onwards will be examined in relation to three geographic zones that exemplify the key types and range of anti-Semitic development, from the more advanced industrialized liberal democracies of Western Europe (Britain and France), through a central constellation (Germany and Austria), to the underdeveloped peasant societies and autocracies of Eastern Europe (Poland and Russia).

Anti-Semitism as Ideology

The first part examines the general features of anti-Semitism as an ideology, as a system of thought relating to the political, economic and social order. At one level of analysis, anti-Semitic works appear to be hopelessly confused, contradictory, irrational, and therefore lacking in the internal consistency that historians of ideas normally expect to find

within a 'rational' system of political thought. For example, Jews were seen as both the key agents of capitalism (bankers, stock-market traders) as well as of revolutionary socialist organizations that sought to overturn capitalism; Jews were hated for trying to assimilate into gentile society as well as for remaining apart; the Jews were accused of promoting scientific materialism that undermined religious faith and also acting as diabolic agents, a dark and occult force that remained loyal to the Talmud and to the 'blood libel', the ritual murder of Christian children. Underlying such apparent and often puerile inconsistency lay an inner unity and cohesion: as Stephen Wilson notes: 'It was a system of belief that provided a total explanation of a supposed state of cosmic and social decadence by identifying the Jews as the evil agents of that dislocation and decay.'¹ Anti-Semitism was highly attractive precisely to the extent that it could 'resolve' the contradictions and tangled confusions of modernity through oversimplifying, universal causes that could appear quite cogent to 'common-sense' opinion. It was able to provide a total explanation for every conceivable ill in modern society through the 'diabolical causality' of a great Jewish conspiracy that was, from behind the scenes, intent on achieving global domination through the control and manipulation of entire national economies and political systems. As Urbain Gohier explained in *The Jewish Terror*: 'Watchwords launched by the heads of the Jewish nation in whatever part of the world they find themselves are transmitted, heard, and obeyed immediately in every country; and countless obscure and irresistible forces immediately prepare for the desired effect, the triumph or ruin of a government, an institution, an enterprise, or a man.'²

The central characteristic of such a 'paranoid' ideology is that it could always 'prove' that any misfortune was the work of Jews, even in the absence of any evidence. Indeed, the very absence of proof was itself seen as an indication of the insidious and diabolic power of the Jews to suppress the truth, particularly through the ownership and control of the press by Jewish magnates and journalists. It was in the very nature of such 'paranoid' forms of thought that they were not open to critical evaluation by the normal standards of proof. Conspiracy theory enabled anti-Semites to present a single cause for every great and petty hatred in society, from dislike of modern art and feminism to fears of moral decline and degeneration. When the carpets of the anti-Semitic propagandist Edouard Drumont were soaked in January 1910 by the Seine in flood, he found the inevitable answer: upstream from Paris, he claimed, extensive deforestation had destroyed the natural cover and the retention

of rainwater. This destruction was the work of greedy and ruthless Jewish entrepreneurs. This instance provides an example of the way in which modern anti-Semitism reformulated traditional and age-old stereotypes of the Jew as the rapacious and anti-social exploiter into a pseudo-scientific, rationalist discourse of natural causation that fitted in with modern secular perceptions of the world. The popular appeal of anti-Semitism was precisely the fact that it offered clear and simple answers to extremely complex and disturbing questions, from the causes of unemployment and economic depression to rising crime and immorality. As Michel Winock notes, herein lay the very modernity of anti-Semitism in that, in a new age of the 'masses', it knew how to capture the people's attention through providing a simplification and fictional *why* for the misfortunes of the world: 'An action cannot be grounded in too subtle or too nuanced an analysis of the living context; in contrast, it becomes a rallying cry if it is based on a universal causality and a mythological system of representation that allows people to bypass the rational approach.'³

Anti-Semitism developed as a coherent ideology during a period of gestation from *c.*1860 down to the late 1880s and, by 1890, could be found in the works of numerous ideologues and propagandists, from Wilhelm Marr and Otto Glagau in Germany, to Széchenyi and Istoczy in Hungary, Schonerer in Austria, and Drumont in France. The similarity in the key ideas across Europe arose from the fact that anti-Semitism was international in scope: major thinkers readily borrowed ideas from one another, while the First and the Second Anti-Jewish Congresses at Dresden (1882) and Chemnitz (1883) saw the direct contact of representatives from Germany, Austria, Hungary, Russia, Romania, Serbia and France. Anti-Semitism was fully formed as a system of ideas by 1890, and very little new was later added to the ideological formulations that remained largely unchanged between the late nineteenth century and the present day. In the following section the structures of this anti-Semitism are analysed with reference to five major themes relating to the economy, religion, nationalism, decadence and biological racism.

Economic Anti-Semitism

The Jews had been viewed by European society for many hundreds of years as a group that was peculiarly adept at moneylending and commerce, and forms of usury and economic exploitation that were regarded as both unethical and parasitic on the main body of hard-working Christians

who generated true wealth through hard labour. This traditional type of anti-Jewish sentiment was reformulated to fit in with an age in which the vast expansion in finance capitalism, the growth of modern banking, stock-exchange activity, paper money and currency manipulation was associated with all the worst aspects of uncontrolled capitalism. Both conservatives and socialists attacked the rise of enormously wealthy magnates, the accelerating oppression and exploitation of the working class and peasantry, and the creation of ‘unearned’ fortunes through cunning manipulation of money markets, speculation and fraud.

Anti-Semitism drew much of its critique of contemporary capitalism from socialism and Marxism, but whereas the latter, in spite of hints of an anti-Jewish bias, interpreted exploitation fundamentally in terms of class interest and the relations of production, the former placed a much stronger emphasis on the primary function of the Jews. For the anti-Semites, the Jews were the key driving force behind all forms of rapacious capitalism, able to exert a frightening and growing stranglehold over the world’s economy through an international network of financiers. The perceived enormous wealth of Jews connected directly to their ability to monopolize the press, control public opinion, ruin and displace the ancient landed aristocracy, and, as *nouveaux riches*, to flaunt themselves as owners of great country estates and as patrons of high-society restaurants, theatres and social networks, from which they would have been previously excluded. This anti-capitalist position of anti-Semitism enabled it to make an appeal to diverse groups and interests that were losing out in the crisis of modernization, small peasants, artisans and landed gentry, who were going under, and members of the bourgeoisie, who lost money in the stock-market crashes like that of 1873 or found entry to the professions (law, medicine, journalism) increasingly competitive and difficult.

Religious Anti-Semitism

The religious roots of anti-Semitism were ancient. Traditional anti-Jewish prejudice had been inspired since the origins of Christianity by a world-view that had made the Jewish people, as Goncourt claimed, ‘a race bespattered with the blood of a God’,⁴ and collectively guilty of the worst crime imaginable. Jews, it was thought, were commanded by their religion to subvert, abuse and defile everything that was held most holy by Christians, and the age-old persecution of the Jews was fuelled

by rumours of symbolic inversion of the sacred, desecration of the host and the 'blood libel' or ritual murder of gentile children at Passover. Such traditional forms of anti-Jewish belief, far from disappearing in the later nineteenth century, were integrated into the new anti-Semitic movements. Where the potential mass audience was still most profoundly religious, as in the Catholic populations of rural France, Germany, Austria and Poland or Orthodox Russia, anti-Semitic agitators emphasized the old crude themes of Jewish diabolic intent. But, in general, religious anti-Semitism was marked by a major restructuring and the 'modernization' of its discourse.

Traditional anti-Jewish prejudice was tempered and moderated by the paradoxical belief that the Jews were an essential component of Christian eschatology in which the Second Coming of Christ depended on their conversion. The mission of the Church was the conversion of the Jews and orthodoxy maintained that after baptism the Jew became a full member of the Christian faith and community. This doctrine was at odds with modern racism which was built on the idea of radical difference: each race was so fixed in its essential characteristics that it was impossible for individuals to cross over the divide and assimilate into another group. While racism formulated radical exclusion mainly through biological and 'scientific' theory, religious anti-Semitism achieved an identical goal through cultural formulations and the precept that the Jew remained a Jew even after conversion. Baptism of the Jews was as effective, it was claimed, as 'trying to wash a blackamoor white'.

Emancipated and assimilated Jews in Western Europe during the course of the nineteenth century had become closely associated with a dynamic liberal culture that placed a high value on education, intellect, scientific thought and progress. The Church, which by the late nineteenth century was in crisis and facing the challenge of secularism, scientific explanation of the universe, socialism and militant anti-clericalism, portrayed the Jews as engaged in a war against Christianity, the agents of a subversive rationalist tradition that originated in the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. Anti-Semitism endowed Jews with an essential way of thinking, a 'corrosive intellect', that was materialistic and profoundly opposed to the Christian world-view and to spiritual values. Religious anti-Semitism was able to find a single scapegoat and explanation for the huge weight of complex, modernizing forces, from industrialization and urbanization to rural decline and the collapse of traditional hierarchies and values, that did, in reality, present an

enormous threat to the Church. However, while the Church was in crisis by the turn of the century, it still held an enormous influence and used its considerable power over public opinion, through the pulpit, Church schools and Catholic mass-circulation newspapers, to disseminate anti-Semitism.

Degeneration and Anti-Semitism

A third strand in anti-Semitism relates to the theme of decadence and degeneration. As we saw in Chapter 1, European bourgeois society in the late nineteenth century was profoundly suffused with a sense of morbidity, decay and cultural pessimism. While modern racism began to analyse this in terms of Social Darwinism and biological deterioration, this anxiety also found expression through anti-Semitism. Traditional anti-Judaism had, since the pogroms of the Middle Ages, portrayed the Jews as a dangerous internal enemy which insidiously threatened the very life-force of Christian society through the poisoning of wells and the deliberate spreading of the plague. Increasingly through the nineteenth century, anti-Jewish discourse was peppered with images or metaphors of the Jews as a monstrous fungus, a parasitic growth that fed upon the healthy body of the host society, finally reducing it to an emaciated and sickly shell. This age-old paranoia was taken on board by modern anti-Semitism, but, once again, we find that the traditional formulations were increasingly expressed through a secular and scientific language. The Jew was viewed in biological terms as a race that carried tainted and diseased blood in its veins, a source of dangerous 'bacilli', of venereal disease and vague but horrifying germs, that threatened to infect European society. Exclusion of the Jews, the construction of a barrier against social contact and intermarriage, was expressed through a language of pathology that played upon the profound and often irrational anxiety of contemporary society towards sexual disease and 'degenerative' illness. The rather nebulous, and thus all-inclusive, concept of 'degeneration' also extended to the closely interlinking concepts of physical health and morality. The Jews were viewed as the major organizers of prostitution and the white slave trade, and anti-Semitic texts betrayed an exaggerated and lurid prurience, a heated sexual fantasizing about the Other, a mixture of sexual loathing and fascination, that equated Jews with moral corruption, physical deformity and disease.

Nationalism and Anti-Semitism

A fourth component in anti-Semitism was related to a deepening form of 'closed' or exclusionary nationalism that sought to define itself, the concept of a homogeneous and cohesive group identity, over and against the threat posed by an internal 'alien' presence. Throughout late nineteenth-century Europe nationalism assumed an increasingly conservative and aggressive form that was partly linked to the insecurities of deepening international tensions and anxieties about the security or integrity of the nation-state. Nationalist ideologies, rooted in romanticism and conservative traditionalism, emphasized the idea that membership of the homeland could only be acquired through descent from countless generations of forebears, from the ancient *Volk*, or people who carried the culture, language and spiritual values of the nation in their 'blood'. In opposition to xenophobic nationalism the Jews were seen as profoundly alien, a dangerous and subversive 'foreign' element lodged within the territory and fabric of society. Jews, it was thought, constituted a 'nomadic race' that had no roots, no sense of belonging, and since they clung to their own ancestral customs and religion, they constituted a 'state within the state'. In an age when patriotism and sacrifice for country was infused with powerful religious feeling, the Jew was perceived as a profound danger, a person who owed primary allegiance to his own race-nation. In particular, nationalist anti-Semitism targeted the Jews as 'cosmopolitan', members of an international network or 'nation' of Semites whose perfidious goal was the subversion, weakening and destruction of the homeland, through the control of global finance, the organisation of Marxist revolution, or the fomentation of destructive wars between states. The paranoid image of the Jew as the 'enemy within' was to find expression in countless spying panics, of which the Dreyfus affair was the most famous, or in challenges to the patriotism and reliability of Jewish soldiers during times of national crisis or war.

Although, for purposes of analysis, the various strands of economic, religious, degenerative and nationalistic anti-Semitism have so far been treated separately, in reality the standard discourse wove all these elements into a powerful, cross-referential matrix. Endless numbers of texts could be quoted to illustrate the typical 'flavour' and structure of anti-Semitic discourse, but here a single passage from a newspaper of 1891 will suffice to show how the themes of parasitism, destructive capitalism, global conspiracy and anti-nationalism were typically woven together.

The Rothschild leeches have for years hung on with distended suckers to the body politic of Europe. This family of infamous usurers, the foundation of whose fortunes was laid deep in the mire of cheating and scoundrelism, has spread itself out over Europe like a network. It is a gigantic conspiracy manifold and comprehensive. There is a Rothschild – a devoted member of the family – in every capital of Europe. Vienna, St Petersburg, Paris, London, Berlin, are each and all garrisoned and held for family purposes by members of this gang. This blood-sucking crew has been the cause of untold mischief and misery in Europe during the present century, and has piled up its prodigious wealth chiefly through fomenting wars between States which ought never to have quarrelled.⁵

Here the Rothschilds were seen as not only a hideous and monstrous growth, a parasite that reached across Europe, but also as the instigators of international conflict and war which, through putting nation-states at each other's throats, simultaneously weakened these societies while making huge profits at their expense. Such Jews could obviously have no sense of national identity, of patriotism or belonging.

Scientific Racism and Anti-Semitism

The fifth and final element to be considered is the specifically racist component in anti-Semitic ideology. The term anti-Semitism, which was a neologism probably first used by Wilhelm Marr in 1879 and which certainly gained currency in the same year through the foundation of the German Anti-Semitic League, was specifically racial in its formulation since it referred to the Semites, a group that was defined by contemporary scholars as a people of the Middle East who were biologically and linguistically quite distinct from the European 'Aryan'. The new term, which spread very rapidly into popular usage, marked a shift from traditional forms of anti-Jewish prejudice that were fundamentally religious, to a type that was based on scientific criteria. Anti-Semitism appealed much more readily to a secular age in which historical and social phenomena were interpreted through a rational and scientific approach that included physical anthropology, material culture, evolution, geography, climate and linguistics. Racial anti-Semitism facilitated an ideological position, freed from the restraints of Christianity, that erected a radical barrier between immutable groups that were locked

into their physical and mental differences. Drumont, in *La France Juif* (1886) – a work of enormous influence that by 1914 had attained 200 editions – presented history as an endless conflict between the enthusiastic, heroic, disinterested Aryan and the money-grasping, scheming, clever and deceitful Semite. He reflected the new thinking in describing his work as ‘an ethnographical, physiological and psychological comparison of the Semite and the Aryan, these two personifications of races that are distinct and irremediably hostile to each other’.⁶ The Belgian anti-Semite Picard also wrote in 1892 of this essential biological difference:

Of race one can say that it is IRREVOCABLE. . . . It is not altered by any change of milieu; it persists: it is always there, like one of those mineral poisons, which, once introduced into an organism, can never escape analysis. . . . With whatever disguise a Semite living among us may masquerade, he will remain himself, in his body, and more so in his soul. Should he interbreed with one of us, his Semitic blood will affect all his issue; we know enough about heredity for this point not to be insisted upon.⁷

Racial anti-Semitism showed a profound ambiguity towards the Jews. The Jews of Europe in the late nineteenth century could be divided, in a rough and ready way, into two main types: in Eastern Europe the Orthodox, Yiddish-speaking and highly traditional Hasidic Jews, often living in ghetto conditions of considerable poverty, were immediately recognizable by their dress, culture and language. By contrast, in Western Europe emancipation and upward social mobility had led to a remarkable integration of Jews. Many had converted or abandoned all signs of Jewish observance, and were completely indistinguishable in physical appearance and culture from their fellow British, French or German citizens. Anti-Semitism delighted in its gross caricatures of the so-called *Ostjuden* or Orthodox Jews who moved westwards in their hundreds of thousands in the 1880s to escape Russian persecution. The Orthodox or ‘ghetto’ Jew enabled anti-Semites to deploy the most grotesque, traditional images of the Jew as an immediately recognizable physical type, invariably dirty, repulsive, hook-nosed and yellow-skinned, like Dickens’ Fagin who, distinguishable by his kaftan and red beard, ‘seemed like some loathsome reptile, engendered in the slime and darkness through which he moved: crawling forth, by night, in search of some rich offal for a meal’.⁸

By contrast, what was profoundly disturbing to anti-Semites about the integrated Western Jews, was that they could not be spontaneously

identified in a crowd, and it was this very invisibility that rendered the Jew a far more dangerous and frightening presence, operating secretly and destructively within the bowels of society. Richard Wagner described the assimilated Jew as a master of disguises, ‘a plastic demon’, and ‘His physiognomy and form changes. He conceals himself, he slips through the fingers like an eel. Today he wears Court livery and tomorrow drapes himself in a red flag . . . one doesn’t recognize him; unnoticed he invades all circles.’⁹ The modernizing Jew was, ironically, far more disliked than the Orthodox and highly traditional Jew; an antipathy that arose from the fact that it was the assimilating Jews, highly educated and ambitious, who presented a major challenge to the Gentile domination of both the universities and employment in the professions (particularly in medicine, the law and journalism), in banking and commerce, the civil service and political office. The contradiction between an anti-Semitism which attacked Jews for their refusal to abandon tradition and to assimilate and an anti-Semitism that attacked the Jews for denying their ancient roots and modernizing was resolved by the usual conspiracy theory. The French anti-Semite Gougenot de Mousseaux claimed in 1869 that the split between Orthodox and Reform Jews was a cunning strategy for world domination: the first group, the ‘indestructible nucleus of the nation’ would retain the Talmudic way of life, while the latter were sent out as emissaries to penetrate and subvert the Gentile world from within.¹⁰

The problem faced by the anti-Semites was how to ‘contain’ the Jews, how to halt and reverse the gains made possible by emancipation, and to find techniques that would enable the identification of the ‘invisible’, their symbolic marking, and their exclusion from the nation and *Volk*. The problem here was that the modern Jews, those that offered the greatest challenge, could no longer be readily identified through religion. The growth of a racial anti-Semitism from the 1870s onwards was in part an attempt to reconstruct and reassert ethnic hierarchies that were rapidly disintegrating, to rebuild and reinforce breached defences that would keep the enemy outside. Scientific racism presented itself as a rational technique of identification: the Jew might try to disguise himself as one of ‘us’, by conversion, change of family name and other ‘ruses’, but his true nature was irrevocably stamped in biology, to be revealed by the scalpel, the microscope and the anthropologist’s callipers.

However, the prime logic of racial anti-Semitism, to demarcate the Jew as irredeemably Other, could find expression through cultural and literary forms, as well as biological science. For example, in a macabre

short story by Oscar Panizza, *The Operated Jew* (1893), the grotesque anti-hero, the Jew Itzig Faitel Stern, possesses all the most exaggerated and absurd qualities of the traditional anti-Semitic stereotype: he is deformed and twisted, bow-legged and diseased, has thick black locks, fleshy lips, a hooked nose, yellowish goggle eyes, speaks with a nasal twang and 'a rich amount of saliva', and presents the spectacle of a 'monster', a 'dreadful piece of human flesh'. Stern spends his fortune on a complex and painful 'psycho-physical operation', a medical transformation or plastic surgery, that will transform him into a good German: his twisted bones are broken and reset by surgeons, his hair bleached golden by drugs, his Yiddish accent removed by speech therapy, and his 'Jewish blood' is totally replaced through a transfusion of blood from strong peasant women. Itzig, now Siegfried Freudenstein, 'passes' as a Gentile and marries a blonde German girl. But at the wedding feast he gets drunk and grotesquely reverts to 'racial type', his nasal voice returns, his face becomes sensual and fleshy, his eyelids droop, his hair begins to curl and changes from blond to red, then to dirty brown and jet black, and he begins 'clicking his tongue, gurgling, and tottering back and forth while making disgusting, lascivious and bestial canine movements with his rear end'. The bride and guests flee from the 'counterfeit of human flesh'. Apart from the strong undertow of sexual prurience, the horror of miscegenation and racial pollution, the story is a powerful assertion of the inescapable physical and psychological difference of the Jew – a difference that is constructed through a naturalistic vocabulary and 'scientific' racial scrutiny.¹¹

So far we have looked at anti-Semitism mainly in terms of ideas, but intellectual history alone can tell us very little about the wider causes of anti-Jewish racism and how and why particular social groups were drawn towards such sentiments. What was distinctive about the new form of anti-Semitism that emerged from the 1870s was not only its ideological 'shape', but the fact that these ideas were elaborated simultaneously by ever-widening circles of ideologues and political propagandists until they became a common currency. The following exploration of the map of anti-Semitism, based on the three 'constellations' of Central, Eastern and Western Europe, begins with an examination of the Central area represented by Germany and Austria. Both countries shared similar features of late but rapid industrialization, fragile liberalism, rising German nationalism, a remarkable ascent of Jews into financial and professional circles, and the organization of the most significant anti-Semitic political parties prior to the First World War.

Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria

Contrary to expectation, the number of Jews in Germany was not particularly high, rising from 512 153 in 1871 to 615 021 in 1910, figures that, as a percentage of total population, actually represented a decline from 1.13 per cent to 1.07 per cent. Within Austria (leaving aside the sprawling multi-ethnic Habsburg Empire), Jews numbered about 180 000 in 1910 or 2.5 per cent of total population. Despite these relatively low, and even stagnant numbers, anti-Semitism between 1870 and 1914 was in part fuelled by growing Jewish visibility, a perception of a rapid increase in numbers and power, and anxiety that they were set to ‘conquer’ the Germanic peoples. The visibility or prominence of the Jews arose from three factors. Firstly, there was a growing internal migration of Jews from poor, rural areas into the major cities, where they often became concentrated in slums. Secondly, political persecution of the Jews in Russia and desperate poverty in Eastern Europe led, after 1881, to an enormous westward flow of Jewish refugees. Although only 70 000 were allowed to settle in Germany – most of the diaspora of 2 750 000 Jews crossed the Atlantic – there was a deep anxiety that Jews would pour over the borders from Poland and Russia where 75 per cent of the world’s Jewish population was located. The Jewish population of Vienna grew dramatically from 6000 in 1857 to 175 318 in 1910, most of them refugees from Galicia. The Eastern Jews, with their distinctive dress and language, appeared as a barbaric throwback to the most primitive anti-Semitic stereotypes. In 1879 the influential historian Treitschke warned of the dangers of an invasion of Posen by ‘all the filth in Polish history. There was nothing German about these people with their stinking caftans and their obligatory lovelocks, except their detestable mongrel speech.’¹²

However, for the anti-Semite, by far the most threatening Jewish presence arose not from the impoverished and alien *Ostjuden*, but from the ‘rise’ of the highly westernized assimilated Jews. The period from 1850 down to 1871 had been a ‘golden age’ for German Jews; they were widely tolerated and, even before the German Emancipation Law of 1869 removed all limitations, they had taken full advantage of new-found acceptance and opportunities in order to forge ahead. The Jewish community, with its highly literate culture, achieved a remarkable degree of upward social mobility through educational achievement and entry into the professions, particularly medicine, law, journalism and finance. The dynamic rise of the Jews led to their ‘over-representation’ in many

sectors, where they constituted a percentage that was much higher than their presence in the overall population. In Prussia for every 100 000 Jewish males 519 went into higher education, while for Catholics and Protestants the figure was 33 and 58 respectively. The competition from Jews, at a time of over-provision of graduates, led to an anti-Semitic backlash in student and professional associations, and moves to impose quotas or a total exclusion.

During the course of the nineteenth century the Jews, in their battle for emancipation, had become closely allied with political and economic liberalism, the advance of parliamentary democracy, the extension of civil rights, equality before the law, and overall values of rationalism and progress. In Central and Eastern Europe it was the historic weakness of the bourgeoisie, linked to late industrialization, that had given the Jews such a prominent role as modernizers, as investors and industrialists. During the late nineteenth century the Jews came under increasing attack as the symbol of modernizing forces, of the rapid industrialization and urbanization that appeared to be destroying traditional society. Unlike Britain and France, where the industrial revolution had started much earlier and evolved gradually, Germany and Austria were affected by an accelerated and more traumatic pace of change. Germany, in particular, faced the tensions and upheavals produced in a traditional society by an almost unprecedented advance in new technologies, backed by capitalist finance. The anti-Semitic political parties that began to appear from 1879 onwards were able to recruit among urban groups that were in crisis as a result of the stock-market crash of 1873 and the following economic depression that lasted until 1896. Typical victims of change were the small shopkeepers of Berlin and Vienna who blamed their problems on Jewish-owned department stores and retailers, or the artisans and self-employed who could not compete with large-scale, industrial enterprise. Anti-Semitic propagandists shared much of the socialist critique of capitalism as an exploitative and inhumane system, but crucially blamed the Jews, rather than class relations, for the crisis which they were undergoing.

An interesting example of the links between economic modernization and the growth of populist anti-Semitism can be found among the peasants of Hessenland. German agriculture prospered between 1850 and 1870, but by 1871 Hessenland was undergoing a transition to capitalist forms of farming, linked to the penetration of railways and access to urban markets. The peasants who clung to the old open-field system faced depressed agricultural prices, indebtedness, bankruptcy and the

loss of mortgaged lands. Jews played a major role in the region, as they did throughout Central and Eastern Europe, as cattle dealers, traders and moneylenders. Otto Böckel, the so-called ‘peasant king’, from 1885 began to establish an electoral base in Hesse through an anti-Semitic movement that blamed the ‘evil’ Jews for the farmers’ plight and mobilized the peasantry through the use of modern propaganda techniques. Böckel established his own newspaper, organized mass meetings, torchlit rallies and songfests, set up credit co-operatives and legal advice centres, and built up a network of grass-roots activists through anti-Semitic clubs, the *Reformverein*. Through such modern and innovative techniques of mass party organization Böckel was able to gain a sensational victory in the 1887 election at Marburg.

The possibility of such mass politics was crucially dependent in Germany and Austria, as in so many other European states in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, on the extension of the vote and, in this respect, modern anti-Semitism can be integrally linked with the extension of parliamentary democracy. Karl Lueger, the famous mayor of Vienna who so impressed the young Adolf Hitler, was able to build up a power-base in the city through a demagogic and opportunist anti-Semitism that appealed to the ‘little man’, the artisans, shopkeepers, clerks, teachers and minor functionaries who felt most threatened by Jewish competition. It was precisely this group, the ‘five-florin men’ who had been enfranchised in 1882 and who held the key to the control of Vienna, who were cultivated by Lueger’s skilful populism.

Modern anti-Semitism was not, however, a phenomenon that found support solely among those groups that were facing economic and social crisis from the advance of industrial and financial capitalism. Of equal importance was the growth of reactionary and defensive forms of nationalism that appealed strongly to thriving and successful members of the middle and upper classes, to academics, lawyers, editors, writers, doctors and businessmen. In Germany from 1879 there was a distinct sea-change towards a conservative, ‘closed’ nationalism as Bismarck, faced with economic crisis, the rise of the Social Democratic Party and potential revolution, opted to resolve internal problems by channelling growing tensions into aggressive nationalism and social imperialism. It is no coincidence that at the very moment that German society was mobilizing against external dangers, it should also turn against the Jews as an alien, internal threat to national solidarity. A widespread view was that emancipation had been granted to Jews on condition that they become totally assimilated into society and an integral part of the nation, yet the

Jews, it was felt, showed a perverse tendency to retain their religious and cultural identity and sense of apartness.

Anti-Semitic writers marked a shift from an assimilatory discourse which insisted on the total 'disappearance' of the Jews through religious conversion, intermarriage and other forms of integration, to a racial language that emphasized the radical non-Germanness of Jews for which the only solution was physical exclusion or expulsion from the nation. Adopting the ideas of French racists like Gobineau and Drumont, or the *volkish* and anti-modernist romanticism of German nationalists like Paul de Lagarde and Julius Langbehn, and the Anglo-German Houston Stewart Chamberlain, the whole of history was interpreted as a constant race-warfare between the blond, heroic and inventive Aryans and the parasitic, cowardly and destructive Jews. The ideal of a strong and spiritual German *volk* was associated with an ancient bloodstock and organic community which was rooted in the soil, the forests and landscape. It was precisely the life of the peasantry and of venerable cathedral cities, so powerfully evoked in contemporary Romantic literature and arts, that was thought to be most threatened by the corrosive forces of capitalism, industrialism and the soulless materialism orchestrated by cosmopolitan Jewry. In the late nineteenth century the boundaries of the German 'race' were increasingly seen as identical with the boundaries of the nation, and this aggressive national-racism fed into the Austrian pan-German movement led by the anti-Semitic agitator Georg Ritter von Schönerer, and into the Pan-German League.

Historians are in disagreement as to the impact of anti-Semitism on German and Austrian society before the First World War. The various German anti-Semitic parties (the German Reformers, the German Socialists, and the Christian Socialists), having reached a peak with 16 seats in 1893 and 3.3 per cent of the vote, were in decline by 1896 and by 1914 – after 30 years – had not achieved one of their declared aims. Too many historians, looking for the roots of Nazism, have badly distorted our understanding of the past by selecting out all the most extreme examples of anti-Semitism from before the First World War, while neglecting the considerable forces arrayed against it. In Germany and Austria before 1914 *political* anti-Semitism was restricted in scope by a number of factors. Firstly, the dominant forces of conservatism, wedded to authoritarianism and traditional élitism, were horrified by the growth of the new forms of populist anti-Semitic mobilization and the activities of rabble-rousing demagogues were seen as dangerous and as distasteful as Socialism. More crucially the Wilhelmine state, as well as Austria under

the rule of Emperor Franz Josef, upheld the rule of law in the defence of Jews and deployed its power to contain and restrict anti-Semitism. For example, the Civil Service Decree of 1892 forbade state officials, and especially teachers, from being active in the anti-Semitic parties, while between 1893 and 1915 the public prosecutor brought 537 individuals to trial for anti-Semitism. The enormously powerful Social Democratic Party, while it had individual members tainted by hostility to Jews, maintained a solid opposition to anti-Semitism and prevented it taking deep root in the working class. Many members of the middle class only confided their anti-Semitism in private letters and diaries, a sure indication that the open expression of prejudice was still felt to be socially unacceptable in educated circles.

In spite of this limited success of anti-Semitism, which surged and declined with the onset and end of the great depression of 1873–96, there exists a broad consensus among historians that all the essential ideas of inter-war anti-Semitism were already fully developed between 1870 and 1914 and also widely diffused into German and Austrian culture. Before 1914 it seems likely that specifically scientific and biological forms of racial anti-Semitism were made almost universally available (although not necessarily accepted) by the middle-class and working-class 'intelligentsia', through a vast array of propaganda sources, from newspapers and novels to the activities of nationalist organizations like the Pan-German League, the Navy League, the Agrarian League and the Army League. Evidence for the relationship between elaborated forms of racial anti-Semitism and popular culture can be provided by Otto Böckel's farmers' movement in Hessenland. In a pamphlet of 1887, *The Jews, Kings of Our Time*, which became a classic of anti-Semitism, Böckel set out to expose appalling cases of Jewish usury and exploitation of the peasantry. In his *volkish* idealization of rural life, the 'way of our ancestors', and of the destructiveness of the Jews, he presented the latter in pseudo-scientific terms as 'a tenacious, ancient race that is remote from our own and that cannot be disposed of through baptism or mixed marriage . . . an alien race that thinks differently, feels differently, and acts differently from us'.¹³ However, Böckel, who had a superb feel for the culture and mentality of the peasantry, modified the more sophisticated and overtly racist language that he directed towards an educated middle-class audience for a more populist discourse when he addressed the peasantry. In his campaigning newspaper the *Reichherold*, he replaced a scientific form of racism with one that appealed more to the traditional Christian anti-Judaism of the farmers. The rhetoric of anti-Semitic ideologues could

take on a pseudo-scientific or naturalistic expression without having to be formulated in a technical way: for example, in 1893 the Bavarian Catholic priest and politician Georg Ratzinger stated with Social Darwinian overtones: 'Parasitism can no more be tolerated in commercial life than in nature. If it is not stopped, it will overrun all other higher forms of life.'¹⁴ A further example of the way in which racial anti-Semitism filtered downwards from 'high' into popular culture by an almost invisible, but powerful osmosis is provided by Hitler's account in *Mein Kampf* of his early days as an unemployed down-and-out in Vienna.

The fragmentation and ineffectiveness of organized political anti-Semitism in Germany and Vienna prior to 1914 led its opponents to underestimate its force. In 1906 the Socialist leader Bebel remarked of anti-Semitism: 'It is consoling that it has no prospect of ever exercising a decisive influence on political and social life in Germany.'¹⁵ Anti-Semitism was, however, slowly finding its way into the organizations of students, teachers, judges and other professional groups; into the Protestant and Catholic Churches; nationalist leagues; as well as into a myriad of propaganda outlets, from novels and newspapers to theatres and popular clubs. Anti-Semitism was endemic, not so much as a set of abstract ideas or intellectual choices, but rather as a complex of feelings, prejudices and thoughts such that the simple word 'Jew' immediately triggered a set of associations, of hostility and revulsion, ranging from fears that German identity was endangered by 'cosmopolitanism' and revolutionary socialism to deep anxieties about parasitic capitalism, materialism, feminism, homosexuality, social reform, treachery, miscegenation and racial degeneration. In an inverse direction, the radical anti-Semitic propagandist Theodor Fritsch was capable of making lengthy speeches without once mentioning the Jews by name, by utilizing a standard lexicon that was known to all. The word 'Jew' thus became a metaphor for everything that was most 'un-German' and it was this 'mind-set', entrenched within culture and language in the late nineteenth century, that was transmitted forward into the First World War and an apocalyptic era of mechanized killing, revolution and the radical dislocation of all economic and social certainties.

Anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe

During the last two decades of the nineteenth century most educated opinion would have immediately associated the most violent and

pernicious anti-Semitism not with Germany, Austria and France, but with Tzarist Russia, where a wave of bloody pogroms first erupted in 1881–2, and then on an even larger scale in 1903–6. Turning to an analysis of the East European constellation of anti-Semitism, attention is concentrated on Imperial Russia, which included ‘Congress Poland’ that was annexed by the late eighteenth-century partitions, although similar conditions could be found in Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia and Hungary. Jews were largely excluded from the heartland of the Empire, including Moscow and St Petersburg, where they made up 0.1 per cent of the population. In 1881 the four million Jews of Imperial Russia were concentrated in the Pale of Settlement (2.9 million people or 12.5 per cent of the total population) and in Polish territories (1 million people or 13.8 per cent of the population). By 1897 numbers had increased to 5.2 million, or half of the world’s total Jewish population, concentrated in one of the most poverty-stricken and underdeveloped areas in Europe.

As in Germany, anti-Semitism grew in response to the profound economic and political tensions of modernization, as market forces penetrated the almost feudal agrarian society, while a late and explosive industrialization in the major cities led to mass inward migration and the creation of a volatile proletariat. However, the situation was quite different in that anti-Semitism was barely influenced by the ideological and scientific racist forms that emerged in Western Europe, but was expressed in terms of the traditional Catholic and Orthodox anti-Judaism of an ignorant, superstitious peasantry. The 1881–2 pogroms, while linked to a crisis of modernization, had more in common with the collective murderous assaults of Medieval or pre-industrial Europe than they did with the type of political anti-Semitism found in the West. The archaic structure of anti-Judaism can be shown by the fact that outbreaks of violence were invariably fuelled by traditional religious beliefs in the eternal role of the Jews as persecutors of Christ, perpetrators of the most evil acts of desecration and subversion of the Christian order.

Enlightened West European opinion was appalled by the resurgence of Medieval forms of irrational prejudice and rumour, that Jews had poisoned the wells of Christians or engaged in the infamous ‘blood libel’, the ritual murder of Christian children at the Passover and the use of their blood to bake *matzoh*. Pogroms frequently erupted during the celebrations of Holy Week, a time of popular revelry and mass drunkenness, when religious parades through the streets reminded people of the role of Jews in killing Christ. The infamous 1903 massacre at Kishinev,

a town of 147 000 people with a volatile ethnic mix of Jews (50 000), Bulgarians, Serbs, Greeks, Macedonians, Albanians and Germans, followed on from the murder of a boy which was presented by both the Greek Bishop and the anti-Semitic newspaper *Bessarabia* as a ritual killing. As Jews celebrated Passover on Sunday 19 April a mob of labourers, carpenters, draymen and peasants began two days of looting and murder that left 47 Jews dead, 424 wounded and 1300 houses and shops burned or gutted.

What motivated such outbursts of collective rage? In the isolated rural areas and small towns the Jews performed a traditional role as commercial middlemen, as traders, shop and innkeepers, and moneylenders. Under the quasi-feudal *arenda* system in Poland Jews operated as agents of the lords, taking over the commercial running of estates and distilling vodka, which was a noble monopoly. Orthodox Jews were absolutely distinct from Christians, in their Yiddish language and appearance (black coats, beards, white stockings, *peyes* side-locks) and no intermarriage took place with Gentiles, but in spite of the sharp ethnic divide between each community the daily trading contacts were reasonably amicable. Farmers recognized that Jews played an important and useful economic function. However, the growth of a money economy and the penetration of modern commercial practices into the countryside drove increasing numbers of peasants into debt. Although the great majority of Jews were as poor as the Poles and Russians with whom they lived in a symbiotic relationship, deepening economic crisis led growing numbers of farmers to see the Jews as the instigators and profiteers of the deeper processes of capitalist transformation that were in reality beyond their control. As tensions mounted, the peasants were able to articulate their hatred through age-old proverbs, such as, 'Every Jew a thief', 'Every Jew is a usurer', 'You torture me like Jews tortured our Lord', or 'A baptized Jew, a domesticated wolf and a painted maiden are equally worthless'.¹⁶

However, the most explosive tensions and related pogroms were urban phenomena, a result of the most profound economic transformation. The more traditional the economy, the more important was the role of the Jews in the absence of an indigenous bourgeoisie capable of developing modern commercial and financial systems. In the more enlightened atmosphere that predominated in Russia after 1857 Jews made rapid advances in the towns, becoming more visible through their economic role, the opening of stores, warehouses, banks and factories. In Odessa, for example, Jews grew from 14 000 in 1858 (14 per cent of the total

population) to 140 000 in 1897 (35 per cent of population), and by the turn of the century owned half the large stores, trading firms and shops; 35 per cent of factories; and controlled 70 per cent of the export trade in grain. The Jews, in such a situation, easily fell victim to a major pogrom in 1905 during which a lumpen-proletariat of extremely poor dock workers, day labourers and rural migrants indiscriminately murdered 800 men, women and children.

The traditional interpretation of such bloody pogroms is that they were deliberately orchestrated by the Tzarist government which, by making the Jews a scapegoat, was channelling the explosive and revolutionary forces in Imperial Russia away from the regime. There can be no doubt about the virulent anti-Semitism of the Imperial court, the flavour of which is conveyed in a letter from the reactionary Minister of the Interior, Pobyedonostzev, to Dostoyevski in 1879: 'The Yids... have invaded everything... They are at the root of the Social Democratic movement and tsaricide. They control the press and the stock market. They reduce the masses to financial slavery. They formulate the principles of contemporary science, which tends to dissociate itself from Christianity.'¹⁷ However, the evidence suggests that the government played little part in deliberately fomenting pogroms since the Tzar and his ministers showed a profound fear of popular, mass actions, whether of left or right, that might get out of control. At the local level senior government officials and police officers did show some complicity in violence by their failure to act quickly and effectively against rioters.

Despite the fact that the autocracy viewed all political action and violence as a prerogative or monopoly of the state, the last decade of the nineteenth century did see the growth of new forms of political anti-Semitism in both Poland and Russia that were parallel to the development of mass political organizations in Western and Central Europe. Firstly, in Galicia (Poland) – where the rural population could vote for the first time in the 1890s – the Union of the Polish Peasant Party, founded in 1892 by the clergyman Stojalowski, mounted a strong anti-Semitic and national populist campaign. But more important in the long run was the National Democratic Party (the 'Endeks') founded in 1897 under Roman Dmowski. As will be seen later (Chapter 5), Dmowski whipped up a virulent anti-Semitism campaign after 1903 as a means of uniting Poles, formerly split by the Partition, into a national community by targeting Jews as an internal enemy.

In Russia reactionary and pro-monarchist forces found little space, within an autocratic system that rejected any form of independent polit-

ical movements, whether of the left or of the right, to organize politically for the defence of a regime that was in terminal crisis. The basis for a large-scale political anti-Semitism only appeared with the crisis of 1905, the catastrophe of the war with Japan, and the Tzar's signing of the October Manifesto (30 October 1905) which opened the way to the dismantling of autocracy. Conservative élites, who felt profoundly threatened by industrialization, the penetration of Western competitive society, the dissolution of traditional peasant communities and the rise of revolutionary socialism, went on the offensive against the Jews by founding the Union of Russian People (November 1905) and a range of anti-Semitic leagues, unions and societies known collectively as the 'Black Hundreds'. The 'Hundreds', which tried to establish a mass political base among a decayed aristocracy, urban thugs, reactionary priests and a medley of 'little people' (shopkeepers, cabmen, traders, migrant peasants) who were suffering from unprecedented economic crisis and dislocation, called for the expulsion or 'extermination' of the Jews and orchestrated a wave of assassinations, violent strike-breaking and pogroms. Between late October 1905 and September 1906, the Black Hundreds helped to incite an unprecedented wave of violence and some 650 pogroms in which 3100 Jews were murdered.

Russian anti-Semitism was quite different from that in Western Europe. Firstly, before the collapse of autocracy in the Revolution of 1917, it was not possible to organize the same scale of political movements and parties that had appeared in the West after the 1870s, as the franchise was extended and parliamentary systems became more open. Secondly, very few Russian thinkers or ideologues attempted to develop the kind of scientific racism that was found so widely diffused in the West. A very small number of anti-Semites did have access to the works of German and French racists; for example in 1891 Ivan Aksakov invoked Darwin, claimed that money grubbing was a 'characteristic of the Semitic race', and asserted that Jews possessed innate racial characteristics.¹⁸ Michael Menshikov and Tolstoy were influenced by the Anglo-German racist Houston Stewart Chamberlain. Educated élites did attempt to introduce Western forms of scientific racism or anthropology, but the endeavour remained very restricted since secular and scientific thought could have little appeal in such a traditional society in which a potential middle-class audience was so numerically weak. Anti-Semitic agitators also found to hand, in attempting to mobilize mass opinion, an enormously powerful, traditional and mainly religious form of Jew-hatred that saturated

popular culture and which could be so readily mobilized. For example, a rabid tract that was printed in 1906 by the Black Hundreds on a secret printing press in the Police headquarters in St Petersburg, declaimed: 'Whenever those betrayers of Christ come near you, tear them to pieces, kill them.'¹⁹

Slavophile nationalism provided a much stronger ideological expression of anti-Semitism than scientific racism. Not dissimilar to the romantic, irrational *volkish* form of nationalism in Germany, it provided a sense of an organic, spiritual Russian community, deeply rooted in the native soil and *narod*, which resisted the 'putrid West' with its dangerous forces of materialism, atheism, corrosive rationalism, scientific technology and universal values. Anti-Semitic writers like Dostoyevsky and Danilevsky, in their belief that the Slav's historic destiny was to triumph over a decaying West, were motivated by a racist ideology. However, anti-Semitic hatred formulated in religious, ethnic or 'archaic' Medieval terms was just as capable as more 'modern', scientific forms in inciting large-scale violence. Russia also had a major impact on the formulation of modern anti-Semitism in Western Europe and the United States through the infamous forgery, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which diffused the powerful myth of a Jewish conspiracy for world domination.

Within the 'Eastern constellation' a brief mention of Hungary is important since it demonstrates the extent to which the potential for anti-Semitism could be constrained by social and political factors. By 1920 Hungary had a large Jewish population of 473 355 or 5.9 per cent of the total population, of which 45 per cent were massively concentrated in Budapest, where they constituted 23.2 per cent of the city population. As in Poland and Russia, Jews held a key economic position in commerce and finance as well as in the professions (50 per cent of all lawyers, 60 per cent of doctors, 34 per cent of editors and journalists). It was this geographic concentration of Jews, as well as their relatively large numbers in certain professions or sectors of the economy, that created a high level of visibility and the impression among non-Jews that their numbers were much greater than they were in reality. However, despite this classic Eastern position of Jews, there was a very low level of political anti-Semitism before the First World War. The ruling Magyar élites, concerned at being outnumbered within a complex, multinational Hungary, welcomed an alliance with the urban Jews who showed a West European pattern of assimilation, spoke Hungarian, regarded themselves as Magyars, and embraced Reform Judaism and modernization. Although Istóczy founded the National Anti-Semitic Party in 1883 and

won 13 seats in the Hungarian Parliament, the government took a firm stand against anti-Semitism and the movement, deprived of oxygen, collapsed within a few years.

Anti-Semitism in Britain and France

Lastly, we turn to the West European constellation, exemplified by Britain and France. Although each of these nations was quite distinctive, what they had in common was a long history of state formation and an early, and more gradualist, industrial revolution, so that they were more mature and stable in their transition to liberal democracy than many countries further to the east. The number of Jews was small; by 1900 about 200 000 in Britain (or 0.5 per cent of total population), and a mere 75 000 in France (0.2 per cent of population), in the latter case only one-tenth of the German and one-hundredth of the Polish ratio. Thus, despite a flurry of anti-Semitic activity in Britain that centred on opposition to the arrival of 150 000 East European Jews after 1881, and in the French case corresponded to the height of the Dreyfus Affair (1897–1900), both – as mature parliamentary and liberal democratic states – were able to contain the threat of political anti-Semitism which, by 1905, had gone into retreat.

Britain can be looked at first and most briefly, since this represented the more straightforward of the two. Although Eastern Jews had been arriving in Britain as early as the 1840s, a dramatic increase in the number of refugees from Russia, Poland and Romania began in 1881, in response to persecution and economic misery. The concentration of extremely poor and highly distinctive Yiddish-speaking Jews in the East End of London, led to a growing campaign from 1886 onwards for immigration controls. Both trade union leaders and back-bench Conservative politicians expressed growing concern that the immigrants were competing for housing and undercutting wages at a time of growing unemployment. After a period of agitation lasting some 20 years, an Aliens Act was passed in July 1905 which introduced a modicum of control. Some historians argue that the campaign for controls was not specifically hostile to Jews; it just so happened that they constituted the majority of immigrants. However, a strong current of anti-Semitism can be detected within the British Brothers' League, a right-wing organization that agitated for controls, and in the statements of propagandists like Arnold White. The latter, the anonymous 'Special Correspondent'

of the *Standard* derided the ‘filthy, rickety, jetsam of humanity, bearing on their evil faces the stigmata of every physical and moral degradation’.²⁰ In a rather different key, the Boer War came under strong attack from radical anti-imperialists like the famous economist J. A. Hobson who claimed that conflict had been deliberately fomented for their own profit, ‘by a small group of international financiers, chiefly German in origin and Jewish in race’, a view shared by a Trades Union Congress resolution in September 1900 which condemned a war intended to ‘secure the gold fields of South Africa for cosmopolitan Jews, most of whom had no patriotism and no country’.²¹ Studies of English Literature after 1870, of writers like Trollope, Buchan, Kipling, G. K. Chesterton, Shaw, H. G. Wells, Hilaire Belloc and others, reveals a culture saturated with anti-Semitism and which regarded the Jew as the embodiment of cosmopolitan forces that were corroding and poisoning the traditions of Englishness and national identity.

However, there is a danger in concentrating upon the statements of the most notorious anti-Semites like Joseph Banister and Arnold White, since they remained isolated voices that had a marginal impact. On the whole, British society remained wedded, at all social levels, to traditions of tolerance for persecuted political and religious minorities. Public anti-Semitic statements were felt by the educated, middle classes to be disreputable or, as we would say today, not politically correct. In the lengthy parliamentary debates on the Aliens Bill, MPs went to great lengths to avoid the word ‘Jew’ or carefully dissociated themselves from attacks on the ‘Jewish race’, while even the most anti-Semitic press commentators concealed their identity behind pseudonyms like ‘Old Londoner’ and ‘Stepneyite’. Arnold White found it difficult to encourage working-class witnesses to appear before the Royal Commission on Aliens, noting ‘the disinclination of every Englishman worthy of the name to harass the persecuted Russian Hebrew’.²² Political anti-Semitism remained a marginal issue, one that barely found a purchase outside the confines of the East End of London, and throughout the period between 1870 and 1914, in stark contrast to the Continent, the only known case of collective violence was a highly unusual anti-Jewish riot in South Wales in 1911.

There was also a surprising absence in the research and writings of British physical anthropologists, eugenicists, Social Darwinists and other ‘race scientists’ of any attempt to elaborate a specifically biological theory of Jewish racial identity. Robert Knox, in *The Races of Men* (1850) did devote some space to an analysis of the Jews as a non-Caucasian race, as ‘African and Asiatic, not European’, but later physical anthropologists

showed little interest in this field. This was not a reflection of any underdevelopment of race science as a whole, since Britain was a leader in Darwinism and eugenics, but rather of the relatively secure position of Jews within the society. In the absence of a significant anxiety about Jews as an internal threat to British society, most racial science, including eugenics, was more preoccupied with the dangers of class. As the left-wing scientist Lancelot Hogben remarked: 'In Germany the Jew is the scapegoat. In Britain, the entire working class is the menace.'²³ Once again it can be seen that the development of racial ideology did not stem from the impact of science and ideas, but rather the reverse, race science was structured as an expression of underlying national attitudes and preoccupations. Many Jews were prominent within the Eugenics Society and leading eugenicists, perhaps reflecting the wider religious philo-Semitism of England, even admired the traditional marriage endogamy, sex hygiene and 'unconscious' eugenics of the Jewish people. As a great imperial power British thinking on race was much more centred on colonial subjects (Africans, Indians, Asians) than it was on a tiny, and generally tolerated, internal 'Other'.

The French Jews, profiting from the first act of emancipation in Europe (1791), were by the 1880s highly integrated, upwardly mobile and successful in education, the professions and business – the exception being the Orthodox Jews of Alsace-Lorraine who retained a distinct, traditional identity. As in Britain, this gradual absorption and acceptance of Jews into French society was thrown into confusion by the immigration of 'backward' East European Jewish refugees, especially into Paris. But, unlike Britain, the influx of Yiddish-speaking Jews from Russia, Poland, Romania and elsewhere coincided with a profound political crisis that reached its peak in the Dreyfus Affair. In the autumn of 1894 Captain Alfred Dreyfus was accused of passing military secrets to the Germans, a charge that reflected both a climate of paranoid nationalism, as well as a consistent theme in European anti-Semitism which viewed the Jews as a treacherous internal enemy. The anti-Semitic writer Maurice Barrès wrote: 'I need no one to tell me why Dreyfus committed treason . . . That Dreyfus is capable of treason, I conclude from his race.' The 1895 programme of *La Jeunesse de l'Union Nationale* defined its aim as: 'the struggle against the Jew, the foreigner of the interior, completely refractory to all assimilation, irreducibly opposed to our traditions, our customs, our mentality and our interests.'²⁴

It was only during 1898–9 that the 'Affair' became a major event, splitting France into two warring camps. As Eugen Weber has shown in

Peasants into Frenchmen, the process of welding France into a unified nation-state in line with the promise of the Jacobin Revolution was still gathering pace under the fragile Third Republic. The process of transition to a modern, secular and capitalist society was challenged from a number of directions. Firstly, there were the highly conservative forces, particularly of the Catholic right, which detested the values of the Enlightenment and of the 1789 Revolution which were at the core of the Republican tradition, marked by anti-clericalism, atheism, egalitarianism and universalism. The Church lamented the passing of an ancient France, a golden age of peasant stability and simple faith, of tradition, established hierarchy and organic unity. The Assumptionist *La Croix*, which had a daily circulation of up to 170 000, engaged in an intense anti-Semitic campaign in which the deep insecurity of Catholics, faced with secularism, Socialism and the erosion of religion, was vented on the Jew as the diabolic instigator of 1789, of capitalism and all-things modern, from the liberal laws on divorce to the invention of the crematorium. Secondly, anti-Semitism became the voice of the 'little people', the poor, the unemployed and the frightened *petit bourgeoisie*, who were able to find a simple and readily identifiable cause for all their hardships. The small savers who lost their money in the crash of the Catholic Bank, the Union Générale, in 1882; the small shopkeepers unable to compete with large Paris department stores; the hand-workers made redundant by mechanization; the peasant forced to sell cattle to middlemen at low prices – all such groups that fell victim to the growth of anonymous, large-scale organizations and new market relations tended to moralize the inhuman forces of capitalism, to seek out those malign individuals who were held personally responsible for their suffering and insecurity. Drumont, who reached a huge audience through his best-seller *La France Juive* and his newspaper *La Libre Parole* (circulation 200 000) presented himself as a defender of the oppressed against the Jew, depicted as a bloodsucker, as a capitalist exploiter, a bloated spider at the centre of a web of international financial institutions.

A popular and radical form of 'socialist' anti-Semitism began to make a significant impact on French politics during the opposition movement centred on General Boulanger (1886–8), which threatened an authoritarian *coup d'état*. Although Boulangism collapsed in farce, it was succeeded by a variety of proto-fascist organizations led by demagogues, like Jules Guérin who established the Ligue Antisémitique Française in 1897. The Ligue, which had some 5000 to 11 000 members, engaged in street-level violence, as did the followers of the extraordinary Marquis de Morès, an

adventurer who, in his cult of 'action' and deployment of gangs of muscular La Villette butchers, unemployed workers, criminals and ex-anarchists, was an early model for the fascist thugs who appeared in the 1920s. At the height of the Dreyfus Affair in early 1898 anti-Semitic agitators helped trigger some of the 69 riots that took place throughout France.

The battle that raged in 1897–9 between Dreyfusard and anti-Dreyfusard forces was far more than a conflict over anti-Semitism. The Dreyfusard intellectuals, led by Emile Zola, recognized that the conservative and Catholic forces that were ranged against the Jews were essentially in arms against the secular Republic and the values of 1789. The emancipation of the Jews in 1790–1 was a key symbol of the Revolutionary tradition, the values of universal individual civil rights, citizenship and equality before the law, and hence any move to drive the Jews back into the ghetto was read as an attack on the whole Republican edifice. It was through the mainly ideological war of the Affair that the Dreyfusards welded together a defensive Republican movement that united Socialists and the liberal bourgeoisie in a stable bloc that remained intact until the debacle of 1940. In 1899 the Waldeck-Rousseau government decided to 'liquidate' the Affair and the popular anti-Semitic leaders were arrested. By 1902 the tide had turned against conservative reaction and anti-Semitism and the majority of French people – as in Britain – remained wedded to the values of liberal democracy, order, moderation, legality and respect for the rights of minorities. In March 1905 the visit by Wilhelm II to Morocco, during which he claimed a right to 'peaceful competition' in the French sphere of influence in Africa, sparked off an intense phase of nationalism in which public attention was drawn away from the internal enemy (the 'Jew') towards external dangers and imperial competition.

While the maturity and stability of French political institutions stood firm against the political crisis of the 1890s, French anti-Semitism was rather different from that in Britain in that it found expression in a highly sophisticated literary form and racial theory. Since, as has been noted, anti-Semitism was quite marginal in Britain it never attracted the central interest of major thinkers, but rather that of lesser and uninfluential figures like Arnold White. In France, by comparison, racial anti-Semitism was formulated in a much more powerful way by brilliant and original thinkers or by gifted propagandists. Ernest Renan, one of the most influential voices in late nineteenth-century France, interpreted history through the racial opposition between Aryans and Jews. Drumont, although not an original thinker, was a gifted propagandist who was able

to fuse elements of traditional religious anti-Judaism (the blood libel, deicide, diabolism, poisoning of Christians) with contemporary, biological, racial anti-Semitism, making a powerful concoction. Advanced scientific theories of heredity began to inform the work of racists like the anthropologist Georges Vacher de Lapouge, the sociologists Gustave Le Bon or Jules Soury, who wrote of the absolute biological gap between races. 'Raise a Jew in an Aryan family from birth', wrote Soury in 1902, 'and neither the nationality nor the language will modify one atom of the genes of a Jew, and consequently, of the hereditary structure and texture of his tissues and organs.'²⁵ Although political anti-Semitism had been largely defeated in France by 1905, French writers had succeeded in elaborating radical and sophisticated forms of racial anti-Semitism that had a major impact throughout Europe and which were also to resurface with the rise of fascism in the 1930s. This was in line with the controversial thesis of Zeev Sternhell that the ideological roots of European fascism are to be found more in the France of the 1890s than in Germany or Italy.²⁶ Where Central Europe differed from France was not in the elaboration of a more radical form of racial or ideological anti-Semitism, but rather in the greater potential for aggressive nationalism. German unification was late and incomplete and the Empire was threatened by encirclement from Britain, France and Russia. But by 1905 German political anti-Semitism was in decline and, although it is easy to locate pre-1914 exterminationist statements (as in Russia, France, Britain and elsewhere), there was nothing distinctive about German racism, a 'deutscher Sonderweg', or 'special German path of development', that would indicate an inevitable road to the Holocaust. As will be seen in Part 2, what was to change all this was the revolutionary impact of the Great War.