

AUTHOR OF HITLER'S WILLING EXECUTIONERS

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GLOBAL ANTISEMITISM

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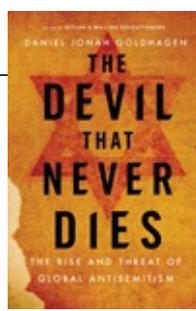
**THE RISE AND
THREAT OF GLOBAL
ANTISEMITISM**

DANIEL JONAH GOLDHAGEN



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For my parents, Erich and Norma Goldhagen

Preface

THE DEVIL, WITH us for two thousand years, is back. This devil has already insinuated himself into hundreds of millions. He has warped religions. He has inflamed minds and hearts the world over. Unleashed riots and pogroms. Led to the expulsion of millions. He has so perverted people's sensibilities that he has convinced them to brutalize and torture masses of people in the name of goodness and God. He has gone further, inducing people to commit mass murder again and again, including one of humanity's most cataclysmic assaults, the attempted murder of an entire people, felling six million of them in one historical instant.

The devil, after a period of relative quiescence, has reappeared, flexes his muscles again, and stalls the world, with ever more confidence, power, and followers. The devil is not a *he* but an *it*. The devil is antisemitism.

In thinking about how to characterize antisemitism and to open this book, I considered many options before settling on conceptualizing it as a devil. Some may think it a metaphor, and perhaps an overdrawn one, yet I mean it not only metaphorically but also conceptually. Sadly, it is not overdrawn. According to how religion depicts the devil, and how those who believe in his existence have understood him, antisemitism is a devil. Compared with the *known* doings of the unseen devil of religions, antisemitism has been far more destructive, a far greater plague on humanity. And it threatens similar destruction again.

Whether you believe in a supernatural devil or just understand such a force conceptually and metaphorically, if you are interested in learning about the world's real devil, this book is for you. Its story is anything but uplifting, but it is important—for Jews and non-Jews alike, for the religious and the secular, for Christians and Muslims, for humanists and students of politics, for all those concerned with goodness and evil, and for those who want to understand critical aspects of today's globalized world, and want it to be a less dangerous, less devilish place.

PART I

ANTISEMITISM

The Devil

ANTISEMITIC EXPRESSION HAS exploded in volume and intensity in the last two decades, particularly in the last ten years. The upsurge has been so meteoric and the canards advanced so prejudicial that if anyone in 1990 or even 1995 had predicted the current state of affairs, he would have been seen as a fanciful doomsayer. This resurgence of antisemitism and its expression has taken place not merely in select countries but around the world, and especially unexpectedly in Western countries. It has taken place in the halls of parliament and in the streets. Among elites and common people. In public media places of worship, and in the privacy of homes. Where Jews live and where they do not. It has done so with classical tropes and with new ones, in long familiar forums and in recently invented ones.

Antisemitism has moved people, societies, indeed civilizations for two thousand years, and has done so despite the otherwise vast changes in the world and in these civilizations and societies—economic, scientific, technological, political, social, and cultural. It has been a powerful force, an animating idea, the glue of many societies and cultures for much longer than practically any major belief system or ideology or political form, or many of our major cultural forms. It long predates and until very recently historically, has been more widespread than genuine democracy as an animating ideology and political system. It long predates the Western idea of liberty becoming widespread, which was not until the modern period. Among intergroup prejudices, antisemitism's longevity is unparalleled. Even the anti-black racism of the West has not existed as long, coming into being in something resembling its classic form much later, when imperial Europeans started to explore and carve up the rest of the world in the fifteenth century. If we consider matters aside from prejudice, antisemitism's singular nature and peculiar power comes into still sharper relief. It long predates the advent of capitalism, and the technological and industrial revolutions that created the foundation for modern economies and prosperity, which have thoroughly altered the world directly and indirectly in every respect. Yet regarding Jews, these changes led not to a diminution of antisemitism but were often used only to deepen and intensify it. Antisemitism long predates the world-altering changes in conceptions of the world that included and were brought about by the Copernican revolution in the earth's and therefore human beings' places in the universe, by the revolution in understanding the early modern period that the very contours of the world were round, and by Europeans' "discovery" of other continents and their conquest of and incorporation of the rest of the world into a world system with its diversity of peoples and cultures. Antisemitism long predates an acceptance of the general equality of human beings, and the moral standing and capacity of women as social, cultural, economic, and political facts. It long predates the current conception of childhood as a time when human beings ought to have their human capacities cultivated and their moral autonomy and rights respected. Antisemitism long predates the emergence of science, a set of rigorous practices to develop objective and correct bodies of knowledge that permeate education, thinking, social relations, and social practices—which, significantly, has barely affected the hold of the nonsense that composes an that flows from antisemitic thinking. Indeed, science has often been perverted to justify such thinking and practice. This includes the foundational revolution in the conception of human beings owing to

Darwin, which was used only to intensify antisemitism by merging it with a new body of derivative social Darwinian thought that rendered Jews a biologically based race of evildoers. Antisemitism long predates entire disciplines of thought, including political science, sociology, psychology, anthropology, economics, and cognitive neuroscience, yet despite the emergence of these sober ways of studying the individual and social world, they have made little dent in antisemitism's spread and power. And it long predates many cultural and art forms, from classical music to the novel to film, each of which—as akin to older art forms, such as drama, philosophy, and history—has been the vehicle for antisemitic expression, often by some of the most distinguished practitioners of each: William Shakespeare, Johann Sebastian Bach, Charles Dickens, Richard Wagner, T. S. Eliot, and on and on. Antisemitism long predates, has been more widespread and more powerful until recent times and in many instances continues to be more powerful, than many of the defining and most essential features of our world today.

The calumnies against Jews have been the most damaging kind. Jews have killed God's son. All Jews, and their descendants for all time (in other words, all Jews forever) are guilty. They are the enemies of God. Jews are in league with the devil. Jews desecrate God's body, the host. Jews parented the Antichrist. Jews seek to destroy his Church. Jews themselves are demons or devils. Jews sought to slay God's prophet Muhammad. Jews are the enemies of Allah. Jews kill Christian children and use their blood for their rituals. Jews kill Muslim children. Jews wreak financial havoc in the countries in which they live. Jews have started all wars. Jews corrupt the moral fabric of societies and lead non-Jews astray in every conceivable way. Jews poison wells. Jews seduce and defile non-Jewish women. Jews are sexually licentious. Jews are behind prostitution. Jews are all criminals. Jews are fundamentally dishonest. Jews form an insidious international conspiracy. Jews are fifth columnists, betraying their homelands during times of war and peace. Jews control the media. Jews corrupt art and culture. Jews are like vermin, rats, strangling octopi, pests of all kinds. Everything Jews say is a lie. Jews seek to dominate nations. Jews seek to destroy nations. Jews seek to enslave humanity. Jews are behind the predations of capitalism. Jews are behind communism. Jews run the Soviet Union. Jews do not contribute anything positive to society. Jews do not do productive or honest labor. Jews are a race apart. Jews are genetically programmed to be malevolent. Jews are highly intelligent and cunning, making them a very dangerous enemy. Jews invented AIDS. Jews are responsible for 9/11. Jews control the United States. Jews caused the Iraq War. Jews are responsible for the financial meltdown of 2008. Jews are a vanguard of the West to enslave Muslims and destroy Islam.

Over the course of antisemitism's mind-boggling time span—while conceptions of the world, and humanity in its many aspects, and political, social, economic, and cultural practices and disciplines have come and gone and, when existing, have undergone such fundamental internal changes as to become unrecognizably new—antisemitism has maintained its core demonology, at least in several of its powerful strains. Christians since the dawn of Christianity have deemed Jews, for example, to be Christ-killers. This has also been the official and widely taught view of the Christian churches, including the once hegemonic Catholic Church, until very recently historically. (Today, many but hardly all Christians not only don't harbor this view, but forcefully reject it.) Even when there were world historical conflicts among different branches of Christianity, the nature of the Jews and their putative evil was one tenet that they shared, and that united them. In the Arab and Islamic world, where antisemitism, here a stepchild of Christianity, came into existence with the establishment of Islam in the seventh century, the central anti-Jewish charges and construction of Jews have also remained constant. The Arab and Islamic antisemitic discourse has at its core the notion that Jews are the prophet Muhammad's enemies and impediments to Islam's triumph, and, having allegedly raised

their hands in violence against the prophet and his emissaries, that they need to be conquered with the sword, and once so, at best be tolerated in a diminished state, until they one way or another—Muslims have often emphasized the sword as the appropriate means—are eliminated. It is not surprising that this antisemitic discourse has, whatever its variations and at times softening, retained this stable and core conception of Jews because it is grounded in the Qur'an and the Hadith, neither of which have, akin to Christianity and the Christian bible, undergone a widespread, fundamental reformation or modernization in understanding or in the practice they inform, and therefore receive a less literal reading and orientation toward the world.

Antisemitism has been highly elaborated and widely encoded in texts—more than any other ethnic prejudice by far. It has not been a mere reflex of prejudice of *we don't like them, or they are bad or threatening or inferior* for this or that reason, which ultimately is what most prejudices are. Vast antisemitic literatures exist in many languages, on every continent, and in different civilization traditions. They run the gamut from the most rudimentary rabble-rousing to the most seemingly learned and sophisticated treatises and tomes. The degree to which antisemitism has been spread, adumbrated, specified, elaborated, turned into slogans, been the bases for seemingly learned disquisitions, served as the pseudo-foundation for science and for the arts, been the basis of social and cultural forms and political movements is breathtaking. The antisemitic litany has existed and been elaborated in virtually all forms of information: written, oral, symbolic, imagistic; in all information vehicles: newspapers, pamphlets, magazines, graffiti, jokes, posters, books, the Internet; and in all art and cultural forms: poetry, novels, plays, operas, liturgical music, painting, film, television series. Tens of thousands of antisemitic books have been published, many of which have been huge bestsellers in countries around the world. Now, with the Internet, the proliferation of antisemitic writing, posting, chatting, social networking, tweeting is effectively boundless, and the ready access people around the world have to it is near instantaneous.

Antisemitism's reach is unparalleled, both historically and today. Hundreds of millions of people have, in the past and today, subscribed to the foundational antisemitic paradigm—which, as we shall see, holds Jews to be in their essence different from non-Jews and noxious—taken part in or imbibed the elements and elaborations of various antisemitic discourses, and believed antisemitism's calumnies. Antisemitism is practically an article of faith, in the literal and figurative sense of the term, in much of the Arab and Islamic worlds, as it still is, if in subdued form among many Christians among whom it was for centuries a central article and formal doctrine of faith, taught and believed in hand-in-glove with the notion of Jesus' divinity. As we will see from the survey data, hundreds of millions have been and are moved by antisemitism's associated passions, including hatred. And hundreds of millions have been and are willing to support anti-Jewish programs, including violence, including—indisputably in the past and all but indisputably today—large-scale lethal violence. The range of people believing in and fomenting antisemitism is also unusually broad. From the uneducated peasant and day laborer to university professors and leaders of countries, from people on the political left to those on the political right, from the secular to devout believers in God, from people organized behind antisemitic programs to those having only imbibed available social and cultural notions, from the poor to the wealthy—all these factors, which usually greatly and differentially influence people's prejudices and other belief systems, have had little influence on antisemitism's general spread and power. The people who are in general the least prejudiced, the educated and the elites, have often been at least as prejudiced as the so-called common man and woman of their societies.

The norms against antisemitic expression in public, which were in place in the Western world for roughly half a century after the Holocaust, have been largely breached, in many places overturned, and

in many others inverted so that in ever more places and contexts affirming one's prejudices and hatreds of Jews is now a norm. The post-Holocaust inhibitions against antisemitism's public expression are unlikely to be restored anytime soon. The enormous increase in antisemitism and in its expression in the public sphere is accelerating. And publicly and widely expressed antisemitism, and its validation by elites and opinion leaders, has a self-reinforcing dynamic, of persuading more and more people of antisemitism's truths, who then further contribute to its expression or to the demand for its expression.

For all its longevity and permutations, antisemitism is nonetheless straightforward and simple to comprehend. Antisemitism is prejudice against or hatred of Jews. It is easy to recognize and understand when reading classic antisemitic literature, seeing cartoons about the vile qualities and deeds that political Islamists attribute to Jews, hearing insults likening Jews to pigs and dogs, encountering charges that they are responsible for all wars or for AIDS, or that they want to destroy humanity, a particular religion, or goodness. Yet antisemitism is also complex. It has many features that are not so readily grasped. And people disagree over whether some features are antisemitic and their bearers antisemites. Is it antisemitism (and is the person who employs it an antisemite) to use classical antisemitic tropes, such as Jews are more loyal to Israel than to their own countries, or Jews have too much power over a country's economy, even if the person does not openly express "hatred" of Jews? Is it antisemitic to be anti-Israel, to focus on Israel's real and alleged shortcomings and transgressions, while ignoring, even apologizing for or covering up, much worse transgressions by nearby states?

That these and antisemitism's many other aspects are not obvious indicates how deeply misunderstood antisemitism is, and how necessary it is for us to explore what constitutes (1) antisemitism, (2) antisemitism's historical and recent development, (3) its general character today, (4) its various dimensions, and (5) its current multiple forms.

Doing so reveals alarming truths:

Antisemitism is back, but not simply in its old form, more precisely put, not simply in any of its old forms, whether age-old Christian, Islamic, or Nazi. It has a changed content and character, rendering it continuous with past forms of antisemitism *and* substantially new, making it immensely more dangerous than at any time since the Nazi period, and likely laying its own new foundation for continuing and ever-evolving future. In great measure, its character is eliminationist. Its different dimensions produce a variety of antisemitisms. It is worldwide and dangerous, threatening politically and physically Jewish communities around the globe, including Israel's very existence, and intellectually and morally the corruption of the minds of non-Jews. I dubbed this era several years ago "globalized antisemitism," or, more in keeping with the already changing times, "global antisemitism," a name that aptly characterizes antisemitism's current character: we live in a globalized or global world and, like so many other things, antisemitism has been globalized. Antisemitism is global geographically and, produced in regions, places, and nodes around the world, available for people who want (and often do not want) to hear, see, or read it. It is not two dimensional, static, staying in whatever form it currently takes, in one place or region, but is three dimensional with constant movement and exchanges around the globe. Its content is influenced profoundly by, and indeed influences in return, the global order.

Antisemitism's European heartland has seen three principal eras of antisemitism. The first was the long Christian era, from its dawn to the nineteenth century. Christianity's politics, psychological needs, and theology defined antisemitism's contours, including identifying Jews with the devil, casting Jews as the dark and perfidious people of a dangerously dark and false religion. With Islam's

advent in the seventh century, a derivative and parallel form of religious antisemitism emerged. Burgeoning Islam took over and transposed the Christian animus toward Jews in accord with its narrative and political needs. The second European era of modern racist antisemitism began in the nineteenth century. Secularizing European civilizations, inspired by nationalism politically and by social Darwinian quasibiological notions socially and culturally, defined Jews as a racially constituted, irredeemable and powerful alien people—in its most extreme variant, essentially as secular devils in human form. The most disastrous of this era's many antisemitic variants was, of course, in Germany, yet these "modern," now better conceived of as Nazi, notions about Jews also were incorporated, starting in the 1930s and then gaining steam, into a "modernizing" Islamic antisemitism, the stepchild of which is what we see today. The third era of global antisemitism, dating from the 1990s, has spread antisemitism beyond the European heartland, and beyond the Islamic continent, and defines Jews as a demonic global threat.

Within each era, antisemitism has had variations and different, even competing strands. Nonetheless, in each era antisemitism has had an overall thrust. Antisemitism's first two eras are important, not only because each one's central features are still with us. Yet the new global antisemitic era demands the bulk of our attention. It is the era we are living in, and is by far the least well understood.

Antisemitism has become so commonplace that it is now taken for granted. Frightening manifestations of the phenomenon are treated as an expected norm, which means that when we ask people—often true of Jews as well as non-Jews—to confront its growth, presence, and power, many do not see what the big deal is. Imagine if, in Arab countries or at home, the things antisemites say with vitriol about Jews were said about any other group, such as blacks. Imagine if political leaders regularly declared in national speeches and interviews, and their country's television networks and newspapers routinely broadcasted, that blacks foment wars and are intending to commit a genocide, or that all blacks may be targeted for violence or must be killed. Would we, in the United States, or in European countries, would African leaders and peoples, want to have anything to do with them? Yet this has been happening to Jews routinely in many countries. People around the world, including political leaders and elites, shrug it off, assuming they pay it attention at all. Antisemitism has made such inroads into the public spheres of country after country, and around the international community, that it has become an integral and accepted feature of our time. Antisemitism's many lesser manifestations, such as antisemites' frequent desecration of Jewish cemeteries in Europe, hardly seem worth noticing.

Antisemitism has perplexed people for centuries. Why is there so much hatred against Jews? Ordinarily, we would expect such a numerically small, historically mainly impotent people to have been ignored or, at most, been the object of some local prejudices. But instead Jews have been the targets of an enduring, widespread, and volcanic animosity, the world's all-time leading prejudice.

Why are people around the world—this is especially relevant to Europeans—so susceptible to antisemitism? How even after antisemitism's unquestionable absurdities led to the Holocaust can Europeans and others accept variants of the same absurdities as truths? The Holocaust might have inoculated Europeans, and non-Europeans, against antisemitism, and certainly should have put them on their utmost guard against any hint of eliminationist politics and exterminationist intentions. Yet a sufficient degree neither has occurred: the world is once again plagued by such politics and such plans.

This devil changes form, but it never dies.

The Jews

WE DO NOT need to know much about Jews in order to study antisemitism. Prejudice is an attribute of the prejudiced people and not of their victims. This is especially true for antisemitism and Jews. Antisemites' accounts of Jews are regularly such a figment of fantastical imaginings that many antisemitic images and accounts of Jews, including several civilizations' principal antisemitic discourses, might as well be describing a people that never existed. And, as a matter of fact, most antisemites historically have never met Jews; the object of their canards and hatreds has been wholly invented.

Nevertheless, examining the character of Jews will introduce them to those who are not familiar with Jews and their history, and will provide a valuable backdrop for those who might be prone to wondering whether the charges of antisemites are true.

Beginning with the obvious, Jews are human beings. As with any large religious, ethnic, or national group, they are of different ages and sexes, from different families, different towns, different cities, regions, even different countries, making their livings in different ways occupying different professions, existing within different communities, cultures, and political and economic systems, having different politics, different levels of religiosity and attachments to being Jews. Jews, especially in modern times, have been enormously socially diverse. There are also individual-level differences: psychological dispositions, mental health or illness, values, intelligence, educational attainment, degree of physical vigor, aspirations, and more. Add historical time, level of economic, technological, and organizational development, Jews' vast geographic, national, and linguistic spread, and the differences among Jews and the variety of Jews become staggering—arguably greater than most other peoples. This makes antisemitic prejudice that much more absurd because it has so improbably imputed to Jews a relative constancy of character and disposition over enormous stretches of geography and time.

Jews trace their origins through the Jewish Bible to Abraham, who, according to sacred tradition, sometime in the second millennium before Jesus founded their monotheistic religion. Centered in ancient Israel, Abraham's descendants began a long, tortuous, and often tortured (by others) history. Nevertheless, Jews managed to create a religion that has endured, with its many developments and schisms, interpretations and reinterpretations, for more than three thousand years. Their religion gave rise directly to Christianity and, less directly, to Islam—two other far more influential, powerful religions. These newer religions and their adherents contested the Jews' custodianship of the tradition from which the new religions originated.

Jews never became as populous as either of these two religious offshoots' followers. Unlike Christians' and Muslims' zealous, missionary, and even martial proselytizing, Judaism is not a proselytizing religion and has considerable impediments deterring potential converts. This inward-looking orientation has been significant for Jews' relations with the worlds of non-Jews, and for antisemitism's especial strangeness, because Jews have not competed for non-Jews' bodies and souls.

Jews were determined to remain Jews despite the aggressive attempts by other peoples and

religions to eliminate them, to convert them, namely to get them to formally renounce Judaism and adopt Christianity or Islam or, in the case of the Soviet Union, to shed their Jewish identity. Jews' complementary capacities to hunker down when under social, political, and cultural siege, and when expelled from their homes to adapt by moving to new regions or countries, are other distinctive features—from the Babylonian expulsion starting in 597 BCE to the draconian Roman occupation and most astoundingly, to the centuries of extensive persecution, ghettoization, expulsions, and periodic mass murders that Jews suffered in Christian Europe starting intensively with the First Crusade of 1096 and culminating with the Holocaust. That remnants of this pulverized European Jewry, and the many Jews Arab countries expelled in 1948, could, together with the Jews already in Palestine, survive and prosper under a state of siege, and ongoing existential threat, for more than sixty years, is but the latest installment of this profound determination to adapt and survive.

This enormous resolve produced a historically singular pattern: a numerically small people, always a minority, maintaining their identity not just as immigrants or into the second or third generation, but across generations and centuries, and not only in one or another region or country where numerical density or special circumstances might have favored it, but in country after country, indeed around the world, often even in hostile and unpropitious circumstances. It also meant that with such longevity in different countries and regions, with different majoritarian cultures and religions surrounding them, Jews naturally became that much more diverse in their own customs and practices, in their linguistic expression, in the food they ate, and more, so much so that Jewish communities and people from different regions and countries often became more different from one another than they were from the majoritarian communities in which they lived. They typically spoke the language of the majority society or developed Jewish vernaculars that were an admixture of Hebrew and the local language, with the local language usually overwhelmingly predominating. Yiddish, with the largest population of speakers and concentrated in Central and Eastern Europe, is by far the best known. Its vocabulary was about 85 percent German in origin, 10 percent Hebrew, and 5 percent Slavic, with a grammatical structure that came from German yet was written with the Hebraic alphabet. Mirroring Yiddish, with various degrees of fidelity, were approximately thirty other such Jewish dialects of majoritarian languages, including Dzhidi (Judeo-Persian); Ladino (Judeo-Spanish), which is very close to Castilian Spanish; Yevanic (Judeo-Greek); and various Judeo-Arabic dialects.

If, in the fourteenth century, or in the nineteenth century, a Moroccan Jew were somehow to have gone to Poland and found himself among Polish Jews, he would have felt the environment to be much more foreign than familiar. He would have likely not been able to communicate with them. Their communal organization, relations with Polish society, mode of dress, customs, concerns would have been far more different to him than those of his fellow non-Jewish Moroccans back home. To be sure they would have likely shared a powerful, in many ways overriding common identity of religion and some common practices, such as observing the Sabbath or having a Passover Seder or observing the practices of Jewish dietary laws, known as kashrut. In this respect, the Moroccan Jew and the Polish Jews would have recognized one another as belonging to a common people, and the Moroccan Jew would have likely been welcome among his Polish counterparts as a Jew. Yet such affinities are a far cry from the kind of thick identities and familiarities that people of a common community, that people who consider themselves to share an identity as a people, typically share.

Jews' wherewithal and determination to maintain their identity for centuries came from the Jewish religion. Judaism, encoded and passed on through the generations, in a sacred set of texts forming the Jewish bible and in a body of commentary on Jewish law, ethics, customs, and practices codified in the Talmud, provided not only a map for the world and daily living, but also historical grounding, a

sense of place, namely a vivid collective memory of an ancient homeland and, critically, a sense of peoplehood that went beyond merely sharing a belief in or adherence to a common religious orientation or God. In this sense, Judaism has been different from other religions. From the beginning, the notion existed that Jews formed a *people*, an identifiable ethnic group, like a large family—after all, they were the twelve tribes—and not merely a freely come together collection of believers. More than just a religious group, and still more than merely an ethnic group, the bible refers to Jews as *Am Yisrael*, the People of Israel, or better translated as the Nation of Israel, an ethnic group with an overriding corporate sense of community that also possesses a territorial home. Even when in a diaspora with no foreseeable prospect of reestablishing their country, Jews thought of themselves as a nation, with a fixed idea of a national home's existence—the land of ancient Israel and Jerusalem as its capital. Only in the post-Enlightenment period, and then ever more so in the twentieth century, when the prospect of citizenship and genuine acceptance in other countries seemed possible, did this notion of nationhood begin to break down—though Jews' sense of peoplehood and their commonality as an ethnic group, even while deeply identified (as Germans, French, English, Argentineans, or Americans) and loyal citizens of their own countries, has endured.

Jews' tenacity in maintaining their identity through the ages and in town, region, and country, was not merely for their right to worship and live according to the religious dictates as they desired, but also to maintain their people. Either religion or ethnicity alone would not have been sufficient, as the many assimilated and gone, forgotten peoples living in diasporas unwittingly attest. It was mutually reinforcing religion and ethnicity—Judaism and Jewishness—that provided Jewish communities around the world the solid foundation to resist the natural tendencies to assimilate.

The centrality of this identity of being a people, shown during more than two hundred years since the Enlightenment, became indisputable finally in Palestine and then Israel. In Europe, the United States, Israel, and elsewhere, Jews' attachment to Judaism, specifically their belief in the Jewish deity and their following of Judaism's religious practices, was much and ever increasingly attenuated compared to what had previously existed for centuries. Yet their identity as Jews persisted.

For two millennia, Jews lacked even the most rudimentary capacity to defend themselves physically, had no effective political representation, and were subjected to considerable discrimination, occupational restrictions, social disabilities, and general hostility. They therefore trod gingerly. They gauged whether their practices, including economic and social practices, might offend non-Jews. Often ghettoized, often expelled from their homes, always in danger of one or another of these fates, if not of being physically assaulted or killed, Jews made few if any political demands. Instead they sought to bend like reeds and approached the political authorities as supplicants asking or pleading for understanding, permissions, protections.

Social discrimination prevented them from owning land in much of Europe and from joining guilds and having jobs in many professions, so Jews concentrated themselves in those occupations open to them. Jews were far more literate and educated than non-Jews, owing to the culture of learning derived from the Jewish biblical injunction to teach the children of Israel to read. Their greater education allowed them to excel in those economic and social spheres permitted to them, including scholarship and those professions requiring or bringing an advantage to those with the ability to read and write, among them commerce of many kinds and, as they opened up to them in modern times, law, medicine, journalism, and university life. Most famously, some Jews became prominent bankers in much of Europe, precisely because the Catholic Church, considering usury (earning interest) to be a sin, forbade Christians from engaging in this necessary economic function. Rabbi Eliezer ben Nathan of Mainz in Germany explained in the twelfth century that because Jews "own[ed] no fields or

vineyards whereby they could live, lending money to non-Jews [was] necessary and therefore permitted.”¹ Despite these educational advantages and occupational successes, the popular view of Jews’ wealth is a myth: most Jews remained poor into the modern period, including the vast majority of Jews in the Eastern European and Russian demographic heartland of Jewry. This was also true of Jews in Arab and Islamic countries.

Today, Jews remain extraordinarily diverse and are Jewish ever less because of religiosity or ethnicity. More than ever, they adopt the idiom of their own countries. The Jews of France and even the Jews of Germany (as alienated and uncomfortable as they remain) are far more like French and Germans than they are like one another, or for that matter like Jewish Americans, let alone the Jews of Israel. Each community of Jews differs substantially from one another in its characteristics and in its political relationships to its own countries. Yet, within certain regions, there are political commonalities.

Owing to the history of persecution and the existence of considerable antisemitism (however much of it may be latent), European Jews are generally timid communities. Regarding their Jewishness, they are inward-looking. With the partial exception of German and French Jews, they are poorly organized politically and reluctant to take public demonstrative political stands either for themselves (they are not corporately active either as liberals or conservatives) or to press foreign-policy concerns regarding Israel, and thus have little collective influence over their countries’ politics. In Western Europe, they are generally well off economically, well-behaved members and exemplary citizens of their communities, but without substantial political engagement or influence. Around Europe Jews know that they are on the defensive, with their institutions, especially synagogues and community centers, guarded like fortresses or bunkers. In much of Central and Eastern Europe, Jews are surrounded by even more overt antisemitism.

Jewish Americans live in a society that has always been considerably more pluralistic and less antisemitic than those of Europe. Here, Jews are self-confident, economically well off, with leading positions across the elite professions, including politics. They are not ashamed or fearful of being known as Jews. Jewish Americans individually and collectively are active politically overwhelmingly not as Jews, but like others, as Americans. The distinction is evident in the way Jews are referred to elsewhere: French Jews, British Jews, German Jews, or Polish Jews (where the immediate nationality comes first) versus the United States, where *Jewish Americans* is how Jews are typically conceived of and described—their Jewishness an adjective of the primary identity of American, making them linguistically and conceptually no different from African Americans, Italian Americans, or Asian Americans.

Jewish Americans vigorously pursue their general political aspirations, whatever they are—as voters, as opinion leaders in academia and the media, as financial contributors to political parties and candidates, and as active politicians. Regarding domestic politics, they are overwhelmingly liberal, progressive, Democrats—in voting, monetary contributions, political affiliation, and political officeholding—having marched and carried the banner of greater social justice from the civil rights era until today. When necessary, they pursue their organized interests, including and particularly in foreign policy, on behalf of their understanding of American values and interests, which includes support of Israel. Their attachment to their Jewishness varies enormously. For most that attachment is less grounded in religion as most Jewish Americans are either secular or not particularly religious, many having but weak attachments to Jewish identity. Rather, their Jewishness resides in some combination of a vaguely articulated notion of being culturally Jewish; membership in the Jewish people while identifying themselves foremost as Americans; a sense of shared history, including the

persecution of Jews, often family members, during the Holocaust; and concern for Israel.

Jews in other non-English-speaking countries are small in number. Canada with close to four hundred thousand Jews and Australia with more than one hundred thousand, and to a lesser degree South Africa with seventy thousand, have vibrant communities existing in countries that are somewhere between the United States and Europe in the degree of hospitableness toward Jews, of the public spheres being contested by and poisoned with antisemitism, and of danger of antisemitic physical violence. They are thus—measured by the difficult position Jews find themselves in almost everywhere in the world—reasonably well off, capable of representing their interests politically, but by no means with the open and self-confident presence that American Jews have as a community or as individuals. In the rest of Asia, Africa, Oceania, and Latin America, only four countries have Jewish populations exceeding twenty thousand, all in Latin America, forming but tiny percentages of the Argentinean (.4 percent), Brazilian (.05 percent), Mexican (.04 percent), and Chilean (1.2 percent) people. In these countries, Jews have little effective communal representation and face to varying degrees considerable antisemitism and the threat of violence, with Latin America, including these countries, becoming during the last few decades ever more depopulated of Jews as they have progressively emigrated owing to hostility and the danger they face. Finally, in the Arab and Islamic world, Jews have effectively ceased to exist since the various countries tolerate but minuscule numbers of aging Jews, where before Israel's establishment there had been close to a million in the region, with the communities in many of the countries having had uninterrupted histories going back thousands of years. It is inconceivable that these countries, coursing with impassioned and virulent antisemitism, could be home to sizable Jewish communities before a substantial and right now hard-to-imagine one-hundred-eighty-degree turn in the character of the public sphere and in the extent of personal prejudice, which is unlikely to occur anytime in the foreseeable future.

Jews in Israel form the majority in an avowedly Jewish country. Not surprisingly, there Jews socially resemble the majoritarian peoples of other countries much more than do the Jewish minorities of Europe, of the United States, or of any other country. They occupy all spheres of society, economic classes, and professions. They span all political affiliations and aspirations. Their Jewishness, including in its many diversities, embodies society, culture, and politics. They are varied ethnically and in their historical understandings. Jews in Israel serve in the military and defend themselves with a vigor and tenacity that set them apart from Jews over the centuries and contemporary Jews elsewhere. A large and more influential minority have one or another European heritage with family histories overwhelmingly grounded in the Holocaust. The majority originate from the Middle East and its different history of persecution by the countries and peoples surrounding and hostile to Israel, which expelled them or their forebears at the time of Israel's founding. In Israel, being a Jew is just being a Jew. It is unproblematic to say: *I am a Jew*, just as it is for most Italians, French, or Swedes to say *I am an Italian*, a *Frenchman*, or a *Swede*.

What gives Jews, far flung around much of the world, common characteristics in the sense of common attributes or dispositions? Nothing. More pointedly, what common dispositions do they have for acting in ways that substantially affect their neighbors in town after town, region after region, country after country? None. If asked to reflect on the humanity of a collection of Europeans or Christians, even from the same country, let alone from a variety of countries, people would see the absurdity of saying that all such Europeans or Christians are the same, or all share the same distinctive attributes, or, more, all share the one master, defining attribute that motives them to harm others. Yet that is precisely what has been the norm for tens of millions, indeed hundreds of millions of people through the ages, and even today, to say with regard to Jews.

The diversity of Jews over time and today—similar to Europeans or Christians—and their many, depending on time and place, communal and individual differences of concerns and practices, render finding the common denominator, especially with regard to how Jews relate or would relate to non-Jews, an exercise in absurdity. True, Jews have certain social characteristics or tendencies, but they are prosaic, nothing special compared to other people. Jewish Americans are more liberal and less martial than non-Jews, but in Israel Jews are more conservative and more martial than many other people. And the liberality of Jewish Americans in the context of American politics would place them squarely in the middle of the European political spectrum, which far more supports welfare-state policies, governmental regulation of society, and social justice. Historically, Jews have been powerless, the pawns and victims of powerful churches, rulers, prejudiced majorities, and mobs, and while they are not so impotent today, especially in the United States and in their national home of Israel, the notions of Jews' commonality and earth-shattering power, and malevolence, continue to be a figment of the antisemitic imagination.

Antisemitism, grounded in reductionist views of Jews, has been and continues to be nonsense. But sadly for Jews and for non-Jews, such nonsense has had world historically destructive consequences—and could again.

The Singular Prejudice

ANTISEMITISM IS ONE thing and it is many things.

Antisemitism is a prejudice against Jews. This means conceiving of Jews—men and women, children and seniors—as having noxious qualities or as undesirable only because they are Jews. Animus in forms ranging from mild distaste to intense hatred typically accompanies such a conception. Antisemites apply their conceptions and animus to Jews as a group and to individual Jews even before they know anything about the individuals. They do so regardless of countervailing evidence.

Antisemitism is many varieties of prejudice against Jews, with diverse dimensions and components, including its varied sources, its many manifestations, and the many different actions it leads its bearers to contemplate and undertake. Antisemitism is thought. It is emotion. It is speech. It is action. It is inaction. Antisemitism exists and can be identified if *any of these* in an anti-Jewish form are present, and a person is antisemitic if he has or engages in *any of them*.

A person thinking antisemitic thoughts, prejudicial thoughts against Jews, is an antisemite regardless of his emotions, his words, his actions, or inactions. A person with an aversion or hostility toward Jews, which he feels as instinctive, even without having more coherent prejudicial thoughts or uttering words or taking actions against Jews, is an antisemite. A person, say for political gain but without inner conviction or hostility, speaking the language of antisemitism is an antisemite. A person who engages in antisemitic action against Jews, regardless of his views of them, is an antisemite. When it comes to prejudice, as with many other things, when you do bad things (your inner thoughts and emotions notwithstanding), you are what you do. And if a person fails to see that obviously prejudicial words or action against Jews is prejudicial and therefore antisemitic, this emerges from prejudicial perceptual bias, and it too constitutes antisemitism.

Antisemitism, like *democracy*, *modernity*, or *conservatism*, has multiple manifestations, is a complex phenomenon, and defies pithy all-encompassing definitions. We have some sense of what each means, but defining each encounters difficulties, as the many existing competing definitions and analyses of each one demonstrate. Further complicating this are the varieties of democracy, modernity, conservatism, or antisemitism that actually exist, which render seeming truths and essential dimensions of one democracy, one country's version of modernity, or one brand of conservatism false or even at odds with a second or a third, let alone a tenth. If we reduce each phenomenon merely to its common features—such as *democracies* are political systems that use elections to determine who governs—then many essential and actual aspects of that phenomenon are lost, not only stripping it of its complexity and richness but likely misconstruing its real character and functioning. In mapping the many aspects or dimensions of the variety of democracies, modernities, or brands of conservatism, the plethora of each one's components and their combinations can become bewildering. Mapping both how each one came about, often through very different routes, and how they actually function, adds several more layers of considerable complexity. All this is true for many other individual concepts we use to map the complexities of worldly phenomena—from *ideology* to

freedom to the general category of *prejudice*. Not surprisingly, this is also true for a phenomenon as enduring and varied as antisemitism, a sense of which we can get by looking at a few prominent and assorted antisemites:

Horst Mahler is a notorious German lawyer, Neo-Nazi, and open antisemite who conspicuously became a member of the Neo-Nazi NPD political party in Germany in 2000, defended the party against the government's legal attempt in 2001 to ban it, and then left the party. Having been a leftist revolutionary and one of the founders of the infamous Red Army Faction terrorist group in 1970, before migrating to the radical right, he has nonetheless remained constant to his lodestar antisemitism, merging Marxist anticapitalist antisemitism with his classical Nazi antisemitic notions. Mahler asserts at once that the "the systematic extermination of Jews in Auschwitz is a lie," and that "billions of people would be ready to forgive Hitler if he had committed only the murder of the Jews" that Hitler was a savior of Germany and not just of Germany; and that "Jewish financial capital" controls a "secret government" the members of which constitute the "directors of the global economic and financial system."¹ He has been convicted several times before German courts for Holocaust denial and other antisemitic statements, which are illegal in Germany. In Mahler, we see an unreconstructed Nazi antisemitic view of Jews' influence in the world, who sees Germans cowed and shackled by the Jews, whose mass murder, in the name of the German people, he justifies.

Norman Finkelstein is not quite so brazen about the past but has been even more poisonous about the present. Finkelstein has been a leading and damaging source of antisemitism, especially in Germany, though also in the Western world more broadly, as one of the best known (non-Arab or Muslim) anti-Israel ideologues and a college campus speaking darling. He has been overwhelmingly politically oriented in his antisemitism of one part denying truths about the Holocaust and one part characterizing Israel in Nazi-like tones. He falsifies and fabricates history, finds favor with Holocaust deniers (even if he does not explicitly deny that the Holocaust occurred), says that Holocaust survivors lie and invent what happened to them, and attacks scholars of the Holocaust (including me) as wholesale inventors of their accounts. He has written an infamous, mendacious book assaulting the truth about the Holocaust and has baldly stated that "Holocaust studies" is "mainly a propaganda enterprise."² Finkelstein's antipathy, which has an obsessive quality, toward having the truth told about the Holocaust (his parents he parades, like court Jews, as survivors) politically serves his main obsession, which has been to blacken the name of Israel. He long treated Israel as the heir of Nazism, as essentially a Nazi-like country, and those, especially Jews, who defend Israel as Nazis or Nazi-like. Finkelstein has spoken in blatant antisemitic idiom about Israel, including, "I think Israel, as a number of commentators pointed out, is becoming an insane state. And we have to be honest about that. While the rest of the world wants peace, Europe wants peace, the US wants peace, but this state wants war, war and war." And, "[Israel] is a vandal state. There is a Russian writer who once described vandal states as Genghis Khan with a telegraph. Israel is Genghis Khan with a computer. I feel no emotion or affinity with that state. I have some good friends and their families there, and of course I would not want any of them to be hurt. That said, sometimes I feel that Israel has come out of the boils of the hell, a satanic state." And what has Israel been doing? According to Finkelstein, who, in calling Israel a "satanic state," conjured up here the age-old antisemitic likening of Jews to the devil: "Israel is committing a holocaust in Gaza."³

Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah, is a stand-in for the views of other Arab and Islamic leaders, political Islamists in general, and Arabs and Muslims throughout the Middle East and in much of Asia. He has been one of the most popular leaders not only in his own country but, until

siding with Assad during the Syrian civil war, throughout the Arab and Islamic world. He was certainly its most popular and visible leader during the Lebanon War in 2006 and in its aftermath, when the Arab and Islamic world believed him to have defeated Israel militarily, owing to the casualties Hezbollah caused and the difficulty the Israelis had in dislodging Hezbollah from southern Lebanon. He too, like antisemites around the world who deny or minimize the extent and the horror of the Holocaust, casts doubt on the Holocaust, saying: “The Jews invented the legend of the Nazi atrocities. It is clear that the numbers they talk about are greatly exaggerated.” But this is a secondary concern of his, as his many antisemitic pronouncements about Jews and Israel abundantly emphasize. His twofold intention is to persuade others of Jews’—and not just Israel’s—depravity and to eliminate the Jews and their political home from the Middle East. On Hezbollah television, Nasrallah declared Jews to be “Allah’s most cowardly and avaricious creatures. If you look all over the world, you will find no one more miserly or greedy than they are.” Why are they this way? Drawing on the Qur’an’s depiction of Jews, Nasrallah calls Israel the “the state of the grandsons of apes and pigs—the Zionist Jews” and condemns them as “the murderers of the prophets.” And how evil are they? Jews demonically control the world’s superpower and threaten the entire world. In February 2012, he declaimed publicly:

I say that the American administration and the American mentality lack nothing from Satanism. But that kind of behavior and that kind of mistreatment of holy books [referring to the Qur’an burning incident in Afghanistan in February 2012] and prophets, and the prophets’ sanctities, and others’ sanctities; this behavior is Israeli and let us say it is Jewish, between quotation marks,—now they will say that this is anti-Semitism—[but] the Holy Qur’an told us about this people: how they attacked their prophets, and how they killed their prophets, and how they affronted their prophets, and how they affronted Jesus Christ, peace be upon him, and how they affronted Mary, peace be upon her, and how they affronted Allah’s great messenger Mohammad, May God exalt and bring peace upon him and his family. This [behavior] pattern about affronting holy books, and prophets, and messengers, and sanctities; this is their mentality, and maybe they want to push things more and more toward a religious war worldwide.⁴

Hezbollah’s very first Facebook posting was in English so the entire world would not mistake Nasrallah and Hezbollah as anything but inveterate, eliminationist antisemites: “O Allah, Please Cleanse This World From Jewish Contamination.”⁵ The notion of Jews controlling the United States was a standard Nazi one and has been a staple of antisemites ever since. The view today that if not for Jewish insidious control of the United States, the United States itself would be a better country, the Middle East would be far better off, and the world would be a better place comes also from those whose antisemitism is principally focused on the United States itself. In their widely discussed book *The Israel Lobby*, John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt peddle such antisemitism dressed up in the garb of academic seriousness and respectability, with their invention of the bogeyman known as the Israel Lobby into which they subsume and thereby delegitimize people who vocally or in various ways materially support Israel. Indeed, their book is the best cloaked major antisemitic tract in English of the last several decades. A small sampling of the antisemitic tropes it draws upon or echoes: Jews working collectively in concrete organizations for nefarious ends. Jewish conspiracy. Jews as fifth columnists. Jews pulling levers behind the scenes. Jews harming the broader societies in which they live. Jews starting or causing wars, in this case the attacks of 9/11, the Iraq War, and the war on terror.

It is as if Mearsheimer and Walt scoured the antisemitic manual, updated any number of its most effective techniques, and dressed them up in language and tone and academic trappings—we teach at *Chicago and Harvard*—for respectability. Their hollow denials that they are antisemites and their empty self-presentation as brave truth-tellers have since been definitively exposed as false by Mearsheimer’s unabashed endorsement (and Walt’s support of Mearsheimer in this matter) of the blatantly antisemitic book of Gilad Atzmon, one of Britain’s most prominent jazz musicians and most notorious antisemites. Atzmon, born in Israel, draws a link between the most famous antisemitic characters of literature and Jews of today: “Fagin is the ultimate plunderer, a child exploiter and usurer. Shylock is the blood-thirsty merchant. With Fagin and Shylock in [a person’s] mind, the Israeli treatment of the Palestinians seems to be just a further event in an endless hellish continuum.” Given the long historical malignant character he attributes to Jews, Atzmon, not surprisingly, blames the Jews for Hitler’s persecution of them and, in an almost unsurpassable flight of hate-filled raving, accuses the Jews of using the Holocaust as “a license to kill, to flatten, no nuke, to wipe, to rape, to loot and to ethnically cleanse. It made vengeance and revenge into a Western value.”⁶ In short, according to Mearsheimer and Walt, Jews, and the non-Jews they have co-opted or allied themselves with (Mearsheimer and Walt are careful to formally insist some non-Jews are also part of the Israel Lobby), insidiously control American foreign-policy making, betray American interests, duped the United States into launching an unnecessary war against Iraq, thereby impoverish the United States, produce enmity for it across many countries, wreak destruction halfway around the world, and cause the death of a large number of innocent Americans. Indeed, in an earlier article—before they sanitize their presentation for the book—Mearsheimer and Walt wrote even more openly in the vein of antisemites past and present. They warned in ominous tones about the power of “Israel and its American supporters”: “If their efforts to shape US policy succeed, Israel’s enemies will be weakened or overthrown, Israel will get a free hand with the Palestinians, and the US will do most of the fighting, dying, rebuilding and paying.”



In 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt is depicted as serving the Jews.

Jews—conniving, powerful, working behind the scenes in conspiratorial concert—ultimately serve their putative Israeli master, betraying their homeland and their neighbors. But there is actually no

such thing as the Israel Lobby (which Mearsheimer and Walt, to cover their backs, concede, buried in their book). There are many supporters of Israel—indeed, by far and away most Americans are, with five times more siding with Israel in March 2013 than with the Palestinians (64 percent to 12 percent—and Jewish Americans, who comprise less than 2 percent of the American people, generally and strongly support Israel. This should not be surprising as Israel has been for decades the lone genuine democracy in the Middle East and a staunch American ally, including during the Cold War. As has long been known and discussed, Israel’s supporters, given their preponderance in a democracy and their passion for the beleaguered, existentially threatened democracy with which many sympathize and identify, have no doubt been influential in Washington. But most of them do not formally or informally belong to a lobby, which in American politics is an organization or group of organizations that seek to directly influence governmental officials and which has the clear connotation of something not in the public interest, or worse. Yet Mearsheimer and Walt deploy this bogeyman concept of the Israel Lobby as their principal conspiracy trope that is an update on the notorious antisemitic tract *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (discussed at length in [chapter 9](#)). They paint a picture of American foreign-policy making that is fantastical, bearing hardly any relationship to what actually goes on or went on, with Martin Peretz, the former owner of the *New Republic*, getting more references in a book that concentrates overwhelmingly on the causes of the Iraq War than does the powerful Secretary of Defense and architect of the war, Donald Rumsfeld, who is mentioned on only five pages! Karl Rove, the behind-the-scenes architect of George Bush’s presidency and overwhelmingly considered to have been Bush’s major political strategist, always with an eye on doing what was best for Bush and Republicans, especially with safeguarding their domestic agenda and electoral fortunes, gets one reference—as many as I do! Vice President Dick Cheney was, by political analysts across the political spectrum, widely considered the most powerful person (aside from or even including Bush) in the administration. Add the journalist Jeffrey Goldberg to Peretz and me, and Mearsheimer and Walt’s *Israel Lobby* has roughly as many index references to us as to Cheney.



Al-Watan, Qatar, March 23, 2003. President George W. Bush is a gun-slinging sheriff in the Iraqi oil fields. His badge is a David Star.

Indeed, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Colin Powell, Karl Rove, and even Bush himself were all deeply enmeshed in the American and Republican power establishment, all mindful and most intimately connected to America’s financial and economic corporate powers and leaders, especially the mighty defense establishment and critical oil industry, with its fortunes intimately tied to the Middle East. The notion that the hard-bitten practitioners of power, and all the powerful economic and political interests they represented and wanted to safeguard, were all duped by a bunch of Jews into launching a massive war they otherwise would not have wanted—and which they therefore would have known

would damage their own political fortunes massively—is on its face ludicrous and can be made, as Mearsheimer and Walt demonstrate in their book, its fake sober tones notwithstanding, only by suspending reality and substituting for it a parallel antisemitic unreality.

As with antisemites historically, who, whatever their other differences, can find common ground in their distemper with and aggression toward Jews, the renowned, wide-eyed Norwegian “Father of Peace Studies,” Johan Galtung, and the American foreign-policy self-styled hard-headed analysts of power Mearsheimer and Walt see eye to eye: the mendacious and nefarious Jews are to blame. Galtung, the founder of the entire discipline of *peace studies*, has publicly done his work since establishing the Peace Research Institute in Oslo in 1959, while keeping his antisemitism to himself—until in 2011 he judged that it was time, and perhaps the world was receptive enough, for him to come out into the open, speak his mind, and warn everyone about the threat of Jews. Galtung is unequivocal: “The Jews control U.S. media,” and use it to warp the American people and politics to support Israel. According to Galtung, Jews have been so pernicious in the past that they produced the justifiable antisemitism of those who wanted to be rid of them, which eventually led the Nazis to want to eliminate the world of their evil. He has sponsored public discussions of the *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which he recommends that people read, and has likened the investment bankers of Goldman Sachs to these Jewish elders. He has even hinted that Israel’s intelligence agency, Mossad, may have been behind the Norwegian mass murderer Anders Breivik, who in 2011 slaughtered seventy-seven Norwegians by bombing government buildings and gunning down members of a youth camp. The giveaway: Breivik was a Freemason, an organization that, according to Galtung, “has Jewish origins.”

Helen Thomas, for years the dean of Washington’s White House press corps, honored with a plaque on her chair in the first row of the White House press briefing room, and with the right to ask the first question at presidential news conferences, never said a word of her true feelings about Jews publicly for all the decades she served the UPI news agency and then the media conglomerate Hearst. In 2010 perhaps because her guard had been lowered owing to her advancing age of eighty-nine or perhaps because she no longer wanted to muzzle her true views and feelings, she responded to a question about Israel on camera, referring to the Jews: “Tell them to get the hell out of Palestine.” “Go home,” she added. Asked where home would be for all the millions of Jews born in Israel and citizens of the country, Thomas wildly declared, “Poland, Germany and America, and everywhere else.”⁷ Thomas, too late, apologized and said that these remarks did not represent her views. But that was when she was trying to keep her job. Several months after losing it, finally deciding to speak openly about her beliefs, she showed that her off-the-cuff remark was no slip of the tongue but a window into her antisemitic soul. Addressing in December an anti-Arab-bias workshop in Detroit, she declared what was to her obvious and necessary to say, revealing the core of her true conviction, which was not merely focused on Israel but antisemitic to the core: “Congress, the White House, and Hollywood, Wall Street, are owned by the Zionists. No question in my opinion. They put their money where their mouth is.... We’re being pushed into a wrong direction in every way.”

Israel, the Holocaust, old antisemitic tropes, dressed up or not dressed up and just trotted out to explain deeds, events, situations, and conflicts large and small that the antisemites deplore or detest, are the common currency of today’s antisemites. Ultimately they are grounded in age-old animus and belief and felt viscerally, no matter their seeming coolness and rational presentation. Mel Gibson’s private and public outbursts exemplify this, especially as his 2004 *The Passion of the Christ*, a blatantly antisemitic film even according to the Catholic Church’s own guidelines for depicting the last days and death of Jesus (discussed in [chapter 10](#)), was presented by him (and others) in the

highfalutin tones of religiously faithful narration. The ancient antisemitic canards, creating a general frame of understanding for Jews, have also led Gibson to express more contemporary demonological notions. When a police officer in Los Angeles stopped him in 2006 for drunk driving, Gibson, obviously moved by bigotry (verging on paranoia) against Jews to think that he was being persecuted by them, demanded to know whether the officer was a Jew and in a rant exploded at him, “Fucking Jews... the Jews are responsible for all the wars in the world.” Gibson’s even more recent private utterances, as reported by one of his confidants, which repeatedly included calling Jews “Hebes,” “oven dodgers,” “Jewboys,” and other gutter-level epithets laced with wild antisemitic assertions, only confirm his public outbursts, which only confirm that the manifest antisemitism of his very public film was driven by his private hatreds.⁸

Fashion designer John Galliano, unfiltered, less canny than the programmatic antisemite Gibson, erupted at least twice in crude, drunken rages in bars and cafés. One time in 2011, in a tirade caught on video, he directed it, puzzlingly, at a group of Italian women, whom he must have imagined were Jewish: “I love Hitler... People like you would be dead. Your mothers, your forefathers would all be fucking gassed and dead.” Another time the same year, a gallery curator, Geraldine Bloch, reported that Galliano grabbed her hair and shouted, “Dirty Jew face, you should be dead,” and told her to “shut your mouth, dirty bitch, I can’t stand your dirty whore voice,” after which he turned to her boyfriend, and (demonstrating hatred that extended beyond Jews) shouted, “[Expletive] Asian [expletive], I’ll kill you!” He shouted at Bloch that she was ugly: “I can’t bear looking at you... you’re nothing but a whore.” Bloch reported that this was all part of Galliano’s antisemitic outburst: thirty antisemitic remarks in forty-five minutes.⁹

What does it all mean? Finkelstein, the leftist, a Jew, denies he is an antisemite, as he has preached to the converted and converts more by spreading venom against those who want the truth to be known about the Holocaust and who do not want Israel mortally weakened or destroyed. Mahler, a neo-Nazi, rages against a world that does not recognize his truths, unabashedly celebrating his Jew-hatred. Nasrallah, the political Islamic leader on the world stage, takes his and his followers’ antisemitism for granted as the foundation for his exterminationist program. Mearsheimer and Walt, self-styled political realists, dress up their decidedly surreal antisemitism in high-flown and self-important defense of American virtue and values against the depredations of Jews. Gibson, a dyed-in-the-wool, old-style Catholic antisemite, spins out his New Testament hatred publicly in cinematic calumny and incitement, and in private and uncontrollable outbursts. Galtung, one of the world’s most renowned peace activists, reveals, after years hiding underneath his cloak of universal moralism and love, a burning and psychotic-like hatred for one people. And like so many others, Thomas, the dean of Washington journalism on the one hand, and Galliano, the fashion designer on the other, harbored their political and personal antisemitism until it too burst out when advancing years and the elixir of alcohol lowered their guards.

The pronouncements of these antisemites suggest several central features of antisemitism.

People ascribe to Jews a panoply of powers and malevolence and a record of destruction that is simply out of this world. Then, because Jews do not say that they plot or do these horrid things, indeed in their every pronouncement about all matters that relate to these and other antisemitic calumnies Jews say the opposite, antisemites make a second fundamental accusation, which only some of them articulate, but which underlies most of what they say about Jews: Jews lie and lie and lie—as individuals, as small groups, as a people—and they do so naturally, conspiratorially, and programmatically as a matter of consciously coordinated policy of the reified entity of world Jewry.

A third startling thing comes out of these examples. Antisemites can point to no concrete evidence

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