

INTRODUCTION

In the history of discriminations, Jews have always occupied a singular role, and still do today. In the vocabulary of inhumanity, especially against minorities, words like racism, genocide and holocaust are now commonplace in all languages and in all societies. All these terms derive from the Jewish experience and were until quite recently used only in connection with the persecution of the Jews. Even today, in many countries where Jews are completely integrated as equal citizens, collectively they remain (in some countries more than in others) a group apart, not judged and treated by the same criteria as applied to other religious or ethnic minorities. Such collective discrimination against the Jews is generally known as anti-Semitism.

Anti-Semitism is as old as the history of the Western world, its origins going back to antiquity. It reached its peak during World War II, but after a period of subdued continuation shows signs of worldwide resurgence, although in a different guise than that known in the past. It is a particular kind of xenophobia, an age-old scourge the revival of which we are witnessing today in both old and new forms, particularly in the Arab world. Traditional anti-Semitism converged with the new anti-Semitism that demonises the state of Israel and the Jewish people. Anti-Semitism has now acquired a new face – political anti-Zionism. However, anti-Zionism in most of the Arab world is not directed exclusively against Israel but extends to Judaism and Jews in general. That so many decades after the Holocaust there should still be a need to discuss anti-Semitism is a great tragedy in itself, for if the Holocaust could not eliminate anti-Semitism, what can?

The origins of anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism is a term used since the close of the nineteenth century to designate manifestations against Jews; more loosely, hatred of the Jews generally. The journalist Wilhelm Marr coined the term 'anti-Semitism' in 1879. It was to denote a new type of Judeophobia which, while building on the prejudices of previous times, tried to find new rationalisations for anti-Jewish attitudes and policies. It has subsequently been directed not only against persons professing Judaism but also, particularly during the Nazi era, against those of Jewish extraction.

According to some progressive thinkers, anti-Semitism is a scourge which for over two thousand years has been an indicator of levels of tolerance and decency in societies. The victims of anti-Semitism may be Jews, but the prevalence of anti-Semitism became a barometer of bigotry, which affects all human beings. It is as old as the history of the Jewish people. It was known well before Christianity, and the anti-Semitic attitudes of the pagan world were the foundation on which Christian anti-Semitism was built. There were already specific elements in the conflict between the ancient Hebrews and their neighbours because the Jews represented the only monotheistic religion in a pagan world different in their beliefs and rituals. Even though many of the characteristics of Christian anti-Semitism were native to itself, some of them were inherited from the pagan past.

To quote the Bible:

Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. And he said to his people: Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war befall us, they join our enemies and fight against us ...

(Exodus 1:8-11)

It is the first known case of an ethnic minority being singled out as a hostile element, a kind of a fifth column. The history of the Jews contains many examples of Jews being accused of siding with an enemy, ranging from Hitler's anti-Semitic propaganda to the general prewar identification of Jews with communism or capitalism.

Another example of a similar nature can be found in *The Book of Esther*. Esther is supposed to have saved the Jewish people from annihilation when Haman, the King's councillor, instigated a plot to kill all the Jews of ancient Persia. In his attempt to convince the Persian

King of the necessity of exterminating the Jewish people, Haman said to him: 'There is a people dispersed and separated among the nations in all the countries of your kingdom and their laws are different from any other nation and they do not observe the king's laws' (*The Book of Esther*, 3:8). Haman, who according to the story was hostile to the Jews because Mordechai refused to bow down before him, dignified his hate by clothing it in patriotism – an often-used reason for hostility against the Jews.

Christianity

Until the adoption of Christianity by Rome, there was no state anti-Semitism. Jews, who already at the time lived in exile, scarcely suffered from anti-Semitism. Later, in the Roman cities, Jews enjoyed full equality, including the right to practise their religion. But while the problem in the pre-Christian world was caused by the peculiarities of a single monotheistic religion among heathens, it subsequently became a conflict and competition between two monotheistic religions, Judaism and Christianity.

In the eyes of Gentiles, Judaism was no longer a universalistic monotheism but now it was first and foremost the religion of Israel. Nation and religion became synonymous – a principle which was adopted by many anti-Semites but particularly applied today by the Arabs. While other nations, when conquered by their neighbours, frequently adopted their gods and integrated them into their own religion, the Jews obstinately refused to accept other gods. Even when they were under foreign occupation, they did not struggle for their territory as much as for their culture and religion.

The Hellenistic rulers and the Romans attempted to impose their culture, but the Jews refused to adopt either. Thus the stubbornness of the Jews and their will to cling to their identity, were important elements that gave a special character to ancient anti-Semitism. 'Because of their blindness God, who transferred his love to the Christians, abandoned the Jews who by rejecting Christ became an accursed people condemned to eternal exile' (Roth, 1983, p. 10). No single figure symbolises more the tortured character of the dispute between the Jews and the early Christians than Paul, who became the apostle of Christ to the Gentiles. He had insisted on the right of Gentiles to assume full status as Christians without observing any of the Mosaic commandments. Paul emerges as the apostolic witness in an effort to

sever all ties between Christianity and Judaism. Yet, the Jews and the Old Testament were needed as witnesses to the new Covenant, which superseded the old.

Historical manifestations of anti-Jewish prejudice can be traced to the early first century AD. Apion, an Alexandrian Hellenistic writer and orator, who incorporated anti-Semitic material in his book on Egyptian history, was probably one of the first to accuse Jews of ritual murder committed on Greeks. The Jewish historian Josephus Flavius in his book *Contra Apionem* (Against Apion) refuted his accusations. Flavius responded to the Alexandrian Greek critics who not only questioned the history of the Jewish people, but also attacked Jewish religious laws, their morality and national character at the same time. These attacks originated in Alexandria due to the rivalry between Greeks and Jews and already displayed anti-Semitic overtones. It is interesting to note that at this early stage of anti-Semitism, Flavius traced back the origins of the hate against Jews to the times of Egyptian slavery. The Egyptians, said Flavius, were jealous of Jews, who left Egypt very prosperous, and they were also against the Jewish religion. Here we already can detect the religious and economic origins of anti-Semitism of more modern times. But while the problem in the pre-Christian world was initially caused by the peculiarities of a single monotheistic religion among heathens, it subsequently became a conflict and competition between three monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Though Christian anti-Semitism existed, at least in rudimentary form, at the very beginning of Christianity, it only unfolded fully in the fourth century. It is already there in outline in Stephen's tirade before the Sanhedrin: 'You stubborn people, with your pagan hearts and pagan ears. You are always resisting the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors used to do ... in the past they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, and now you have become his betrayers, his murderers' (Acts, 7:51,52).

As soon as the Roman State became Christian in 321 AD, Roman emperors from Constantine onward promulgated laws prohibiting conversion to Judaism, which was quite prevalent at the time, on penalty of death. Inter-marriage between Jews and Christians was also prohibited. The law suppressing proselytising forms a series of laws stretching from the peace of the Church under Constantine to the redaction of the Theodosian Code (a set of rules proclaimed by Theodosius II, Roman

emperor, 408–450 AD). The very fact that they are repeated, and the severity of the penalties laid down, is proof both of their ineffectiveness and of the seriousness of the danger. By 423 AD a law was in force, and had probably been so for several years, that forbade the Jews to build any new synagogues and even to repair or improve the old ones; a rule applied later by the Muslims.

In 1096, with the advent of the First Crusade, an era of terror and massacres began for the Jews of Europe. Pope Urban II called for Christian armies to go to the Holy Land to free it from the control of the infidel (non-Christian) Turks. However, the vast throngs of knights, monks and peasants who set out first turned their religious zeal on the Jews they met in northern France and along the Rhine River in Germany. A German monk urged his followers: ‘First avenge the Crucified upon His enemies living here among us, and then go off to fight the Turks!’ (Paterson, 1982, p. 25). Here is the eyewitness account of a Christian observer of what happened at Mainz in Germany:

... Emicho and all his men, having taken counsel, proceeded at sunrise to attack the Jews with lances and axes ... Having broken the locks and knocked in the doors, they seized and killed seven hundred who vainly sought to defend themselves against forces far superior to their own; the women were also massacred, and the young children, whatever their sex, were put to the sword ... Only a small number of Jews escaped this cruel massacre, and a few accepted baptism, much more out of fear of death than from love of the Christian faith (ibid, p. 78).

As many as ten thousand were killed in 1096 alone – approximately one-third of the entire Jewish population of Germany and northern France.

Pope Eugenius III and Saint Bernard of Clairvaux called for a new Crusade in 1146. Abbe Pierre of Cluny in France preached: ‘What is the good of going to the end of the world ... to fight the Saracens, when we permit among us the other infidels who are a thousand times more guilty towards Christ than the Mohammedans?’ (Poliakov, 1976, p. 48). The Third Crusade and the Crusades that followed only resulted in more mob attacks on the Jews. Thus, each time a great movement of faith swept Europe, the Christians set out to kill Jews in the name of the love of God; the Jews were seen as the enemies of Christ. They

were often accused of poisoning Christian wells and were suspected of maliciously causing any epidemic or mysterious death. When in 1347-50 the Black Death devastated Europe, Jews were massacred by the thousands because it was rumoured that they had somehow caused the pestilence.

The situation of the Jews became even more precarious when the Catholic Church increasingly began to dominate the politics of most European countries. The Inquisition, a court appointed by the Pope, came to Spain to root out Christian heretics and Marranos (Jewish converts who secretly observed Jewish rituals). Thousands of Marranos were burned at the stake and many thousands more were imprisoned, and stripped of their property. The fanatical Inquisitor General, Tomas Torquemada, advocated the expulsion of all Jews from Spain, and in 1492 Ferdinand and Isabella finally ordered them out of the country.

A different era in the history of anti-Semitism began during the period of Enlightenment in the eighteenth century. It was the time of rationalism and growing tolerance and equality of all citizens. The isolation of the Jews gradually eased and the idea of the emancipation of the Jews slowly advanced. However, despite such progress, anti-Jewish prejudice was still prevalent. Even the philosophers of the Enlightenment were not immune to anti-Jewish sentiments. Voltaire wrote about the Jews that they were 'enemies of mankind' (Paterson, 1982, p. 65). Jews were still regarded as an alien element. By 1870, the process of emancipation, which started with the French Revolution, was complete in west and central Europe, but at the same time, voices were raised accusing the Jews of remaining a distinct social group in terms of their concentration in certain economic activities. The new anti-Semitism was based not so much on theology as on the allegedly immutable Jewish character and behaviour.

For almost two thousand years, the Christian perception has been that the Jews were collectively responsible for the death of Jesus. Between the time of Jesus and our times, there would be almost continuous persecution of the Jews by Christians throughout the world, the main reason being the crime of deicide, but also for other reasons so complex that they have never been fully identified (Eban, 1985, p. 106). In 1965, the Second Vatican Council sought to modify that understanding of deicide by attributing the blame only to those Jews who at the time directly insisted on his death.

Assimilation and conversion as solutions and beyond

In the course of Jewish history there were many attempts to solve the 'Jewish question'. At some periods in Jewish history, assimilation was seen as a solution. It meant the loss of national or religious identity by absorption into the environment. Among Jews it took several forms. The most common was the abandonment of external 'foreign' characteristics such as clothing or language, but the most extreme was the complete abandonment of Jewish identity by embracing another faith.

This process has not always been voluntary. After Christianity became a dominant religion, the process of conversion was very marked, and it is probable that the great reduction in the number of Jews in the early Middle Ages was due to large-scale conversion from Judaism. In the course of persecution (in Spain, for example) and pogroms, the Jews were often given the choice between death and conversion. The Muslims later adopted the same principle and also practised forced conversion, under the call 'death or Islam'. Faced with the choice, thousands of Jews converted, while as many lost their lives.

A drastic change occurred in the 1880s, when assimilated Russian Jewish students underwent a process of reverting to their Jewish identity. Born into a Tsarist empire and eager to modernise, they embraced enlightenment and saw their future as liberal Russians. Then came the pogroms. The young liberal Jews re-explored their Jewishness and began to emigrate to Palestine. It was the beginning of Zionism.

Although the ingathering of the Jewish people in the Promised Land was always a desire kept alive over centuries of exile, political Zionism owes its origins to anti-Semitism. Leon Pinsker, one of the forerunners of Zionism in the 1880s, pleaded in his *Auto-Emancipation* for a Jewish state to overcome the persecution of Jews caused by their presence in many countries. Theodor Herzl, the founder of political Zionism, discovered his Jewish nationalism through his encounter with anti-Semitism. He originally advocated assimilation as the solution to anti-Semitism but reverted to the idea of a Jewish homeland after the Dreyfus trial. He defined the Jews as a people whose assimilation was impractical and whose plight would deteriorate owing to its social and economic position. He saw the solution in the founding of a Jewish state by international agreement. Once such a state came into existence, he thought, the Jews would become a nation like any other and this would remove the ground for the hostility against them.

There is a historical irony in the fact that, in contrast to Herzl's vision of a Jewish state as a solution to the problem of anti-Semitism, it now appears that the existence of a Jewish state is considered by many as the main cause of contemporary anti-Semitism. The identification of Zionism with racism supports this assertion. The not-so-old argument that if Jews did not exist, there would be no anti-Semitism is being heard again (*Le Figaro*, Paris, 8 October 2001). A conclusion can be drawn that Jews must disappear, and that the solution to the problem of anti-Semitism today would be the disappearance of the Jewish state.

A new theory of racism for the interpretation of history emerged and served as a kind of scientific base for the rationalisation of anti-Semitism. The theory has ultimately acquired a 'scientific' justification under the guise of theory of race and was put into practice by the Nazis. The originator of this theory was the French writer Count Gobineau, but it was subsequently adopted with enthusiasm in Germany.

As can be seen, anti-Semitism, as old as it is, did not always exist in the same form. It went through a process of transformation acquiring new forms depending on historical circumstances. The latest transformation of anti-Semitism is linked to the existence of the state of Israel and predominates in the Arab world.

Anti-Semitism in the Arab world

While European anti-Semitism became somewhat subdued after the end of World War II, it has acquired a new form, particularly among the Arabs. The Arab world is one of the major regions of the world in which anti-Semitism is practised and propagated on a scale not seen for a long time. Now, when the Christianity that invented anti-Semitism goes through pains to turn its back to it, the Arab world, eager to mobilise deep-seated prejudices against the Jews, is adopting it.

Some historians claim that the relations between Jews and Arabs were historically quite cordial, particularly in Islamic Spain, and they also argue that Arab customs, traditions and principles are governed by the teachings of the Holy Koran, which requires all believers to respect the people of the Scripture. The truth is somewhat different. Islam recognises the 'People of the Book' as having a special status in the Islamic state, but they are '*al-dhimma*', people who have certain rights but are also of an inferior status because they refused to join the new truthful religion. This attitude was reinforced by Muhammad's conflicts with the Jewish communities of the Arab Peninsula. Consequently, they were

placed in a position of inferiority vis-a-vis the Muslims (Rabinovich, 1984, p. 44). Arab anti-Semitism is therefore based mainly on religion, and the Koran is often quoted as a justification of anti-Jewish attitudes.

The manifestation of anti-Semitism can be seen in daily material from Arab sources. It is no longer political – it contains the denial of the Holocaust and the threats to wipe Israel off the map. The Western response to such threats is generally appeasement. An item in a British newspaper indicates that trend: ‘A report by the UK Department for Education and Skills says that schools in England are dropping the Holocaust from history lessons to avoid offending the Muslim pupils’. It’s not just Britain; in France, some teachers are reluctant to cover the atrocity for fear of upsetting students whose beliefs include Holocaust denial. And it is not just the institution entrusted with preserving democratic society and Western civilisation, but the school system itself which is betraying that trust. While children are told at home or by Muslim preachers that the Holocaust never happened, teachers are not challenging that misinformation but keep silent so as not to disturb a view based on it. The Hamas Popular Committee for Refugees wrote in opposition to a rumoured plan to mention the Holocaust in a new UNRWA history curriculum: ‘We refuse to let our children study a lie invented by the Zionists’ (Updates from AIJAC, 11 September 2009). Such attitude reinforces racism, intolerance and hatred in the name of a philosophy of political correctness.

Since the creation of the state of Israel, Arab anti-Semitism acquired a new face – that of anti-Zionism. It is based on the assertion that the creation of Israel was due to the Holocaust for which the Arabs are not responsible. They ask: ‘Why must we pay for the crimes of the Nazis? It was Western civilisation that created the Jewish problem in the first place’ (Losin, 1983, p. 421). At the same time, the Arabs are denying that the Holocaust ever took place. It is a blatant contradiction, but in the propaganda campaign, either argument is used by the Arabs world to present a kind of truth in which many people believe.

The contentions contained in this work are certainly controversial and, as in any debate of this nature, may in turn be subject to questioning. However, the evidence presented in this work is based on historical facts that can hardly be questioned. It is a well known fact that any work on a controversial subject contains to a certain degree the personal attitude of the writer. Ultimately, a writer cannot help but present

an image which emerges in his mind after a close and intense study of the gathered material (Schechtman, 1965, p. 8).

Arab hatred against Jews actually began with the advent of Islam. There is a clear parallel between Christian and Arab anti-Semitism; the origins of both have a strange likeness. From the moment the Jews refused to accept Jesus as the Son of God they became the target of Christian hatred. Under the accusation of deicide the Jews suffered persecutions and massacres. Similarly, when Muhammad, who had not been originally hostile to the Jews because he believed the Jews would welcome Islam, realised their opposition, he turned against them with ferocity. In the fifth year of Hijaz, in 626, Muhammad attacked the Jews of Medina. Many Jews were massacred, some were deported to the north and others converted to Islam in order to save their lives. Hence the first steps taken by Islam as well as Christianity brought ruin and destruction to the Jews.

Muhammad's anti-Jewish pronouncements were seized upon and given a new and a more sinister importance by the Arab world. Arab leaders and writers are seeking to endow the struggle against the Jews with an Islamic colouring. For this purpose they retrieve the specifically anti-Jewish injunctions and sayings from the Koran and other Islamic writings: '... and they are cursed for what they have said' (Koran V:65). From the days of the Prophet, the Arabs argue that the Jews are the enemies of Islam, either in direct military confrontation with the Prophet (in Medina), or in plots to undermine Islam through subversion and cunning ill will. Much of the present-day confrontation between the Arab world and Israel is based on these assertions.

Another source of Arab anti-Semitism was European Christianity from which it espoused it in both its religious and secular forms. Local Christians played an important role in transmitting the doctrines and texts of Christian-European anti-Semitism to the Arab world.

The Arab attitude towards the Jews is not always political but takes on a form not seen since the Middle Ages.

The Egyptian government daily *Al-Akhhbar*, in an article published on 25 March 2001, repeated the ancient blood libel, claiming that matzos had to be mixed with the blood of a non-Jew. (*L'arche*, Paris, September 2001, p. 71). It should be noted that such blatantly anti-Semitic material is not written by ordinary people, such as found in letters to the editor, but by recognised and respected intellectuals.

Much is made of the Arab-Israeli conflict to explain the Arab present-day outburst of anti-Semitism. But Arab violence against Jews dates back well before the establishment of the state of Israel. The pogrom in Hebron in 1929 was aimed against all Jewish inhabitants of this town – men, women and children. There were no armed Jews to speak of, there were only a few Jewish settlements of earlier pioneers, and the Arabs were in full control of the old city of Jerusalem including the Western (Wailing) Wall to which access by Jews was restricted. The call was to kill Jews in the name of Allah. The *Farhud*, the pogrom perpetrated in 1941 against the Jews in Baghdad, is sometimes presented as an anti-Zionist outburst, but in essence it was a religious flare-up against the Jewish community by an agitated mob.

The *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, the anti-Semitic fabrication first published in 1903 in the Russian Empire, is recommended reading in the entire Arab world and the press refers to it almost daily.

The following excerpt, broadcast on Palestinian Authority TV, is from the Friday sermon given by Sheik Ibrahim Mahdi at the Sheik Ijlin Mosque in Gaza on 3 August 2001:

All spears should be directed at the Jews, at the enemies of Allah, the nation that was cursed in Allah's book. Allah has described them as apes and pigs, the calf worshippers, idol worshippers ... The Jews fight you, but Allah will establish you as rulers over them, until the day comes when a Jew would hide behind a stone or a tree, and the stone or tree would say: Oh Muslim, Oh servant of Allah, a Jew is hiding behind me, come kill him.
(*Jerusalem Post*, 22 August 2001)

Perhaps the greatest and of most lasting importance is the indoctrination of school children. Some light on anti-Semitic indoctrination in Arab schools was shed by a UNESCO commission of three experts, which in the aftermath of the 1967 War examined textbooks used in UNRWA camps in Jordan, Lebanon, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It concluded: '... liar, cheat, usurer, idiot – terms applied to Jews in certain passages and part of the deplorable language of international anti-Semitism – cannot be tolerated' (Rabinovich, 1984, p. 48). Similar texts are still used in schools under the Palestinian Authority. The entire generation of Palestinian children is being raised on a full diet of hate education, on *jihad* and anti-Semitism (Albrechsten, 2008). The

violent confrontation between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon served the Arabs as a catalyst to a fresh wave of anti-Semitic propaganda. Comparisons are being drawn between Israel and the Nazis and annihilation of the Jewish people is again being voiced. 'There can be no end to the Middle East crisis until Israel is wiped off the map' according to the Iranian president.

The anti-Jewish sentiments of the Arab world are also expressed in the open forum of the United Nations. The Libyan representative in the United Nations pronounced a blatantly anti-Semitic speech, but the anti-Jewish outpouring was not restricted to Libya alone. It was followed by an anti-Semitic speech by the Ambassador of Iran who said that the Muslim countries near Israel 'will soon consider the final solution' with respect to the Jewish state. The resurrection of this code word for the liquidation of the European Jewry by the Nazis passed without interruption or criticism. Syria too joined in the anti-Semitic assault. There was not even a token reaction by the European, Canadian and Latin American representatives. Highlighting the new 'racism' was a speech by The Ambassador of Jordan, Hazem Nuseibeh. In December 1980 he told the General Assembly of the UN that a Jewish 'cabal ... controls, manipulates and exploits the rest of humanity by controlling the money and wealth of the world'. Marouf Al-Dawalibi, a Saudi Arabian delegate to the commission of Human Rights at the United Nations had this to say in the course of a conference on religious tolerance: 'The Talmud says that if a Jew does not drink every year the blood of a non-Jew, he is cursed for eternity ...' (*L'arche*, Paris, September 2001, p. 70). No reaction to the speech was ever recorded.

An occurrence of a similar nature took place during the visit of Pope John Paul to Damascus on 5 May 2001. The virulent anti-Semitic diatribe by the Syrian president Assad who said: '... they try to kill all principles of divine faith with the same mentality that made them betray and torture Jesus Christ, and in the same way in which they attempted to betray the prophet Muhammad (peace be with him) ...' was met with silence by the Pope (*Le Monde*, Paris, 8 May 2001). It seemed as if the Vatican had acquiesced with the anti-Semitic views of the Syrian president.

The next forum for mainly Arab anti-Semitic propaganda was the conference in Durban. The UN hoped to launch from South Africa a new global anti-racism movement. But the World Conference Against

Racism has revealed a clearly articulated anti-Israel and anti-Jewish bias. Pamphlets circulated at the NGO meeting caricatured Jews, and posters carried slogans overlapping the Star of David with the swastika. A booklet, which contained anti-Semitic cartoons, was handed out at the registration desk (*Jerusalem Post*, 30 August 2001).

The anti-Semitism, which manifested itself so blatantly at the conference, mainly inspired by Arabs, was not an exceptional event – it is said to be linked to the Middle East conflict. But if we remove politics as the catalyst of anti-Jewish attitudes in the world forum, we are left with anti-Semitism as the real motivation. What is surprising, however, is the almost total lack of response from world opinion, with only a few exceptions. The anti-Jewish trend during the conference was hardly mentioned in the world press, and there was complete silence from Western intellectuals.

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For a short period after the end of World War II, the Holocaust acted as a powerful inhibitor against anti-Semitism. But as the Holocaust recedes into the past, anti-Semitism is again raising its ugly head. It is not a new phenomenon – it only reached its apex during the Nazi period, but despite the time lapse since those tragic events, the Holocaust continues to be the subject of research, writings and general public interest. Many books and articles were and are still being written about the situation of the Jews during the war in various countries of Europe. It is rather surprising that relatively little attention has been devoted to the attitude of the Arab world, in particular Palestinian Arabs, towards the Jews during World War II. Unlike Germany, France and other European countries, which were investigated and which admitted their role during the Holocaust, the Arabs have so far escaped historical scrutiny. This book attempts to fill that gap.

Present Arab attitudes towards the Jews are based on several assertions, which the book attempts to critically examine. The main assertion by the Arabs is that the establishment of the State of Israel was as a result of the Holocaust for which the Arabs bear no responsibility, and that they were not involved in the extermination of six million Jews. The book asserts that the Palestinian Arabs *do* carry a degree of responsibility for the death of a great number of victims of the Holocaust. Arab pressure upon the British to prevent entry into Palestine of Jewish refugees from Europe, combined with violence against the Jews

in Palestine was certainly the cause of the death of many who could have been saved.

Another Arab assertion is that prior to the advent of Zionism, Jews and Arabs lived peacefully side by side. The truth is that the Jews were, first of all, a minority in hostile surroundings and as such they always had a constant feeling of precariousness. While the massacres perpetrated by the Christians – Crusades, Inquisition etc. – are well documented and often quoted, little had been said about the persecutions and massacres of Jews committed by Arabs. This book provides historical evidence that would indicate that the total number of Jewish victims of successive pogroms perpetrated in Muslim countries is probably not less than the total of the Jewish victims of the Christian world, excluding the Holocaust.

Finally, the Palestinians claim exclusive right to the entire territory of Palestine because they assert that they have inhabited it from time immemorial and that the Jews have no links to the land. Geography books for Palestinian children encourage seeing no Israel; books that feature maps of Israel in the colours of the Palestinian flag describe it as Palestine (*The Australian*, 26 November 2008). The present work disputes this assertion and attempts to establish who were actually the indigenous Arabs living in what is now Israel.

This book attempts to prove all three assertions to be questionable. The main emphasis of the book, however, is the role of the Arabs and their cooperation with the Nazis in their aim to exterminate the Jews. Arab anti-Semitism acquired a certain affinity with Nazi ideology before and during World War II. The leader of the Palestinian Arabs, the Mufti Hajj Amin al-Husseini, spent some time in Berlin with Hitler, whom he called the ‘protector of Islam’, pledging full cooperation in resolving the Jewish question. The Arabs proved to be the people for whom the Mufti, as a close collaborator with Hitler, was a national hero. This work underlines the Arab attitude towards the Jews during the Holocaust and their sympathy and approval of Nazi policy regarding the Jewish question. The Arabs are also the people who did not show any compassion for the victims of the Holocaust during and after the war.

There is much evidence that indicates Arab responsibility for the fate of many Jews who were trying to seek shelter in Palestine. In its conclusion, this book asserts that the entire Arab world and in particu-

lar the Palestinians bear a large degree of responsibility for the death of a great number of victims of the Holocaust. It was the Arab insistence upon the British to put a stop to the entry of Jewish refugees, combined with violent acts, which caused the deaths of thousands who could have been saved. Very little is known about this facet of the Holocaust.

The post-Holocaust period is characterised by relentless attacks against the Jewish people not only in the popular Arab press but also in the popular literature and in education in Palestinian schools. Arab anti-Semitism, which today is manifested inside the Arab world through anti-Israeli speeches, is now indistinguishable from classical anti-Semitic discourse. It is not only hostility towards the Jewish state, but the hatred of Jews as such, in its form and intensity, which recalls the worst moments of the European anti-Semitism.

Despite the attempts to find an underlying cause of anti-Semitism, the problem that still remains unanswered is how such beliefs and attitudes persisted over centuries and do not show any signs of abatement. According to some scientists Judeophobia, as a psychotic state, is hereditary – it is transmitted from generation to generation for the last two thousand years. Culture and ideas are maintained and transmitted through centuries; if they are not inherited they pass away. Anti-Semitism is a unique phenomenon in the history of the world and because it has always had something to transmit, it has preserved its continuity (Eban, 1985, p. i). In Arab countries anti-Semitism is ingrained from childhood by the environment in which anti-Semitism is a permanent feature of Arab society and through education in schools.