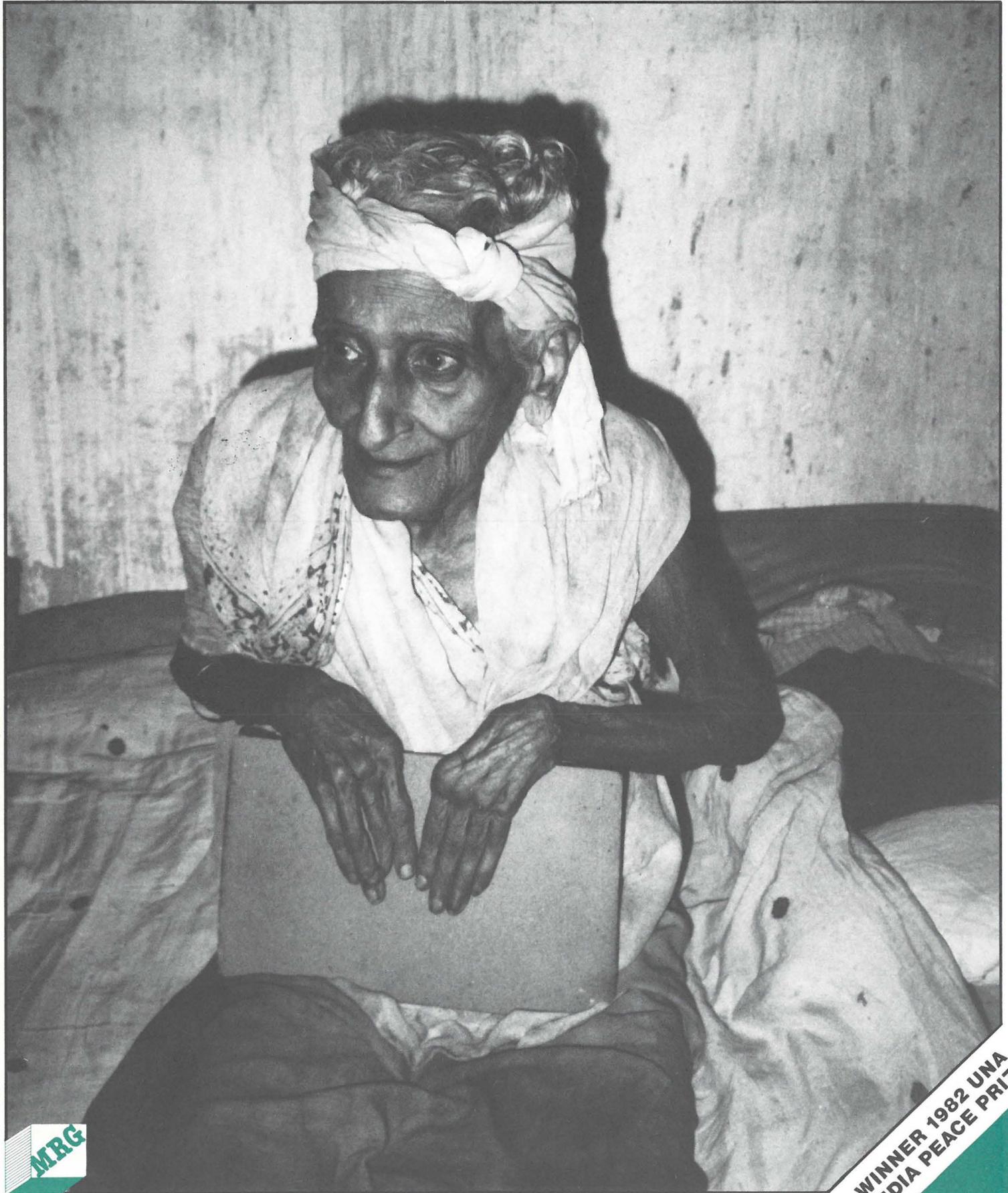


The Jews of Africa and Asia

The Minority Rights Group Report No. 76



The Minority Rights Group Report No. 76 · The Jews of Africa and Asia

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is an international research and information unit registered in Britain as an educational charity under the Charities Act of 1960. Its principal aims are —

- To secure justice for minority or majority groups suffering discrimination, by investigating their situation and publicising the facts as widely as possible, to educate and alert public opinion throughout the world.
- To help prevent, through publicity about violations of human rights, such problems from developing into dangerous and destructive conflicts which, when polarised, are very difficult to resolve; and
- To foster, by its research findings, international understanding of the factors which create prejudiced treatment and group tensions, thus helping to promote the growth of a world conscience regarding human rights.

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The Jews of Africa and Asia:

Contemporary Anti-Semitism and other pressures

By Dr Tudor Parfitt

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with an Appendix on Combating Anti-Semitism by Milton Ellerin

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THE UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from any fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if a man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, Therefore,

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims

THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6. Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7. All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8. Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10. Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11. (1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.

(2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14. (1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

(2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15. (1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16. (1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

(2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17. (1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19. Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21. (1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

(2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22. Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23. (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

(2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

(3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

(4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interest.

Article 24. Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25. (1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26. (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27. (1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28. Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29. (1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

(2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

(3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30. Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

1: ANTI-SEMITISM

Even though the number of Jews living in Africa and Asia (outside Israel) has declined dramatically over the last few decades, there are still many Jewish communities in these areas, most of which have received little or no attention in recent work on the contemporary state of the Jews. Within a few generations several of these communities are likely to have disappeared: in some cases because of the attraction of Israel; in others because of the animosity of most Islamic countries towards Zionism and Jews; in yet others because of the spread of European and Christian anti-Semitism to areas where it was traditionally unknown. Before examining the current position of the remaining Jewish communities in different Asian and African countries, it is useful briefly to analyze, compare and contrast generally anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism; and then discuss the historical attitude of Islam towards Jews.

Jews are the archetypal oppressed minority, and their persecution by a variety of host societies probably has a longer history than that of any other national or religious group. The Hebrew term used by Jews to describe anti-Jewish prejudice is *sinat Yisrael* (the hatred of Israel) in which the word 'Israel' connotes both the religion and the people of Israel. The word used these days in European languages to convey the same phenomenon is anti-Semitism: this is of more recent origin and was first used in 1879 by Wilhelm Marr, a German anti-Semite. Marr used the term in the sense of hostility to Jews and that is the sense the word has always retained. The claim sometimes made by Arabs and others that the Arabs cannot be anti-Semites because they themselves are Semites is no more than a linguistic quibble. In reality, the fact is that the word means Jew hatred and has never been used in the sense of hostility to the Semitic peoples. The last hundred years have seen the development of a vast literature devoted to every aspect of anti-Semitism particularly in its European context.*

It has been argued with reason that the roots of modern anti-Semitism draw sustenance from early forms of anti-Jewish sentiment, including the anti-Jewish prejudice of the pre-Christian ancient world. In Hellenistic times the Jews were the only group who kept themselves more or less fully apart from other groups, who refused to intermarry and, perhaps more significantly still, refused to recognize the validity of the deities of their neighbours. This Jewish exclusivity came to be viewed as a denial of the Hellenistic ideal of the unity of man. At the same time, it must be realized that the monotheism and ethical elaborations of the Jews constituted a popular force and that there was no more potent opponent of Hellenism than Judaism. Similarly, in later Roman times, Judaism, which was still a successful and vigorous proselytizing religion, was perceived by many Roman purists who were horrified by the changes overtaking the Empire, as being in direct and effective opposition to the most basic tenets of Roman Imperial civilization.

With the spread of Christianity, some of these prejudices were to be incorporated into the new Christian attitudes towards the Jews. The ancient pagan notion that the Jews were hated by the gods (in part for refusing to believe in them) was given a new force: they were now denounced as being collectively responsible for the death of the son of God. The entire Jewish nation thus became deicides in the eyes of the Christian world. In time, the church, as part of its struggle for domination, came to see not just Jews but Judaism, too, as the mortal enemy of Christianity notwithstanding the close links between the two religions. Indeed, the very historical and geographical proximity of the two faiths encouraged Christian theologians and church leaders to underline and stress the differences. For the 'Israel according to the spirit' to be acceptable to the pagan societies ripe for conversion to the faith of Christ the 'Israel according to the flesh' had to be fully undermined and discredited.

By the time that Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire in 321 the anti-Semitism which many consider to be a fundamental aspect of the New Testament had united with the complex prejudices inherited from the ancient world to form a powerful weapon against the Jews. With the conversion of the

Empire to Christianity the Jews were to lose many of the rights which they had traditionally enjoyed. They were barred from the armed forces and government services, Jewish proselytism was banned, for a Jew to have sexual relations with a Christian woman was punishable by death. The effects of this and similar legislation were to be felt centuries later when the laws of the late Roman Empire were largely incorporated into the statutes of much of mediaeval Europe.

For centuries the Christian church waged ideological warfare against the synagogue: but despite this, during the first millennium A.D. there is little evidence that ordinary Christian communities in Europe or elsewhere had the fundamental or virulent hatred for Jews which was to characterize later periods. There is evidence that many Jews lived peacefully enough alongside Christians and even managed to attract converts notwithstanding the official ban against proselytism. However, in the 11th century a wave of persecution engulfed Jewish communities in Germany and France. Jew hatred, inspired by a mood of religious hysteria, rose to a crescendo during the First Crusade of 1096 when Jewish communities unfortunate enough to be in the path of Crusader armies were savagely destroyed. During the period of the Crusades the European masses became somewhat more exposed to Christian theology: a theology which increasingly stressed the role of the Jews as the murderers of Christ. During the same period the doctrine of transubstantiation achieved widespread acceptance and this was followed by a plethora of accusations of desecration of the host and ritual murder. (Accusations of ritual murders, called blood libels because of their falsity, took various forms; perhaps the most widespread was the accusation that Jews had murdered a Christian child usually at Eastertime, and had used its blood for ritual purposes in preparing the Passover wafers. A number of popes condemned such accusations to no avail.) The first blood libel brought against the Jews recorded in mediaeval times took place in Norwich in 1144, after the 'martyr' William was allegedly hanged by the Jews of the city at Eastertime. The blood libel in this or similar forms was repeated on countless occasions in mediaeval Europe.

Usury – closed in theory to Christians as it was, in Islamic lands, to Muslims – became a Jewish preserve: necessary for the workings of the mediaeval economy it was in effect sanctioned by both church and State. Inevitably however it meant that Jews, as usurers, became the object of even more populist resentment. A heightened theological hatred of the Jews as well as a feeling that they were destroying peasant society by the manipulation of loans led to the Fourth Lateran Council issuing an edict demanding that Jews be made to wear some distinguishing mark: in some European countries including England, this mark took the form of a disc (often yellow) being sewn on to the clothes.

In the 13th century the Jews were expelled from England and a few years later from France. A popular belief that the Jews were responsible for the poisoning of wells contributed to massacres of Jewish communities in Germany. Between 1348 and 1350, at the time of the Black Death, Jews – held responsible for the epidemic – were expelled from many European cities, while between 1492 and 1497 the inquisition in Spain and Portugal led to the Jews being expelled, not to return for several generations. As a result of the expulsions, following invitations by Polish rulers by the end of the mediaeval period, Poland had become the most populous centre of Jewish life in Europe – a situation which was to continue unchanged until the destruction of Polish Jewry under the Nazis.

Although the Reformation and particularly Calvinism was to improve the lot of Jews in some Protestant areas, the Counter Reformation in its attempt to restore old Christian values throughout Europe tried to demonstrate yet again the inferiority of Judaism and the essential evil of the Jews: one of the effects of the Counter Reformation being the institution of the ghetto which made its first appearance towards the end of the 16th century in Italy and then spread throughout Europe. Similarly, although the main thrust of the Enlightenment was clearly against the persecution of the Jews and the superstitions which, in part, had caused it, in time the Jews became identified by some thinkers of the Enlightenment as being in some sense responsible for the development of the Judeo-Christian heritage and as such enemies of the secular society and states they were anxious to create. In Germany, long after the Jews had embraced secularism enthusiastically, they were still held to be the enemies of the secular state.

* A full bibliography can be found in: Robert Singermann, *Anti-Semitic Propaganda: An annotated Bibliography and Research Guide*, 1982, New York and London; for a select Bibliography see p.15 of this Report.

Until the beginning of the 19th century the majority of European Jews lived in a way which had not changed much for hundreds of years. Most of the Ashkenazim (the Jews from northern Europe, as distinguished from the Sephardim, the Jews from Spain and Portugal) spoke Yiddish and only infrequently the languages of the countries in which they lived; their intellectual interests were almost exclusively concentrated on their Hebrew and Aramaic religious texts; and their habits of eating and dress were different from those of their Christian neighbours. In the course of the first half of the 19th century this situation changed for the Jews of Western Europe, who fairly rapidly began to assimilate to western norms. They threw themselves wholeheartedly into the economic and cultural life of Europe. Particularly in Germany a new Jewish capitalist class was created whose existence encouraged the belief, which spread throughout Europe, that there was an essential link between Judaism and the rise of capitalism. At the same time, a rising mood of romantic nationalism in Germany identified the by now completely assimilated Jews, who liked to think of themselves as complete Germans, as aliens in the Germanic homeland. The combination of this mystical nationalism with the identification of the Jews as manipulative and non-productive capitalists – and therefore the enemies of the working classes – provided part of the background for the destruction of European Jewry some decades later. It can be seen that these two perspectives united extremists of the left and right in one thing: hatred of the Jews.*

During the same period, particularly in France, a somewhat different notion emerged. After the French Revolution many members of the old upper class establishment viewed the Jews as the one group which benefited most from the revolutionary dispositions. The old economic, religious and social resentments – some of them dating from mediaeval times – were thus fanned by the emancipation of the Jews by the revolution. Matters were made worse when Napoleon called his famous Sanhedrin in 1807 as a way of solving the Jewish problem once and for all: in some quarters, at any rate, this meeting at which international Jewry was represented smacked of a sinister cabal. Barruel's book, *Mémoire pour servir à l'histoire du jacobinisme*, saw in the Sanhedrin a Jewish plot to gain political mastery over the world and in it perhaps lie the seeds of the myth of the learned elders of Zion and their infamous 'Protocols'. Later in the century, the Dreyfus Affair polarized French society and institutionalized the equation of anti-Semitism with anti-revolutionary, conservative and pro-clerical forces. The idea of the Jews as a vicious, inimical and powerful body plotting to destroy Christian culture was again fanned by Edouard Drumont in his enormously influential and inflammatory *La France Juive*.

It was Russia however which witnessed the worst outbreaks of anti-Semitism in the 19th and early 20th century. Successive partitions of Poland had bequeathed to Russia a vast and growing Jewish population. The hostility of the Russian masses, encouraged to some extent by the orthodox church (and individuals such as Rasputin), along with State policies designed to force the Jews to assimilate, made life unbearable for the Jews in the Pale of Settlement. Pogroms and physical violence after 1881 led millions of Jews to flee to the west while of those who chose not to leave many joined one of the plethora of revolutionary groups which had sprung up all over Russia. Further anti-Semitic outrages, such as the Kishinev pogrom of 1903, were provoked by the authorities in part to divert the attention of the masses from their own grievances. In 1905 the so-called '*Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*' – a forgery created by the Russian secret police – was published, although it failed to exert much influence until after the First World War when it was translated into many languages, including Japanese.

During the 19th century the growth of nationalism led to the elaboration of a new 'nationalist' anti-Semitism: the racial theories of Gobineau and others were enlisted to try to show the complete physical and intellectual superiority of the so-called Aryan 'race' over the Semitic 'race' and were used to demonstrate that the Jews as a racial (not religious) entity were utterly alien to the Teutonic, Slavic or Gallic spirit and could never and should never be assimilated by their host societies. At the end of World War I German anti-Semites argued that it was the alien Semitic element which had weakened the national resolve and which was responsible

for the 'stab in the back' which led to the defeat of Germany and its allies. Such views, along with the resentment of Jewish economic successes and the prominence of Jews in the liberal professions, in the universities and on the left of the political spectrum, had created a dangerous situation before the rise of Nazism: Jews were remarkably active in the arts and the avant garde and became identified with the 'decadence' of the Weimar Republic. For this and other reasons they were vulnerable scapegoats for the economic and political difficulties encountered at that time.

After 1934, with the victory of National Socialism in Germany, practically every aspect of traditional anti-Semitism was invoked by the Nazi party in a sustained campaign of hate. From the blood libel to well-poisoning every accusation which had ever been hurled against the Jews was used by the Nazis. Every tool of oppression which had ever been used from the yellow badge to complete social and economic marginalization was employed by the Third Reich. A centre for the study of anti-Semitism was established in Berlin and texts and manuscripts were gathered from all over Europe to provide the campaign against the Jews with anti-Semitic material from every period of European history. The Nazi propaganda machine gave unprecedented prominence to the danger allegedly represented by Jewry, while the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 gave full practical expression to the racial theories which had been borrowed from 19th century sources and adapted by Nazi ideologues such as A. Rosenberg. The mass murder of European Jewry by the Nazis can perhaps best be explained as the cumulative effect of two thousand years of different forms of anti-Jewish prejudice and persecution, each one deriving sustenance and confirmation from its predecessors: when the massive economic and technical resources of a supremely powerful State were put at the service of this accumulation of hate and prejudice, it led to the deliberate annihilation, on a scale hitherto unimagined, of what had come to be viewed as a pariah people.

2: JEWS UNDER ISLAM

The harshness exhibited to Jews by Christian society has frequently been contrasted with the widespread tolerance supposedly shown the Jews by Islam. But, as Bernard Lewis has written:

'The golden age of equal rights (under Islam) was a myth... The myth was invented by Jews in 19th century Europe as a reproach to Christians – and taken up by Muslims in our own time as a reproach to Jews.'

Traditionally, under Islam, Jews were *dhimmi* – subjects of the head of the Islamic State. *Dhimma* is the relationship between the protector (the head of the Islamic State, e.g. the Sultan) and the protected (the *dhimmi*) and was the dominant factor in the status and treatment of the *ahl al kitab* (People of the Book): i.e. Jews, Christians, Sabaeans (a Mandaean Judeo-Christian sect) and later Persian Zoroastrians. *Dhimma* requires the State to protect the life and property of the *dhimmi*, exempt him from military service and allow him freedom of worship, while in return the *dhimmi* was expected to pay higher taxes in the form of the *jizya*, not to insult Islam, not to build new places of worship, and to dress in a distinctive fashion in order not to be mistaken for a Muslim. In civil and family law non-Muslims had judicial autonomy except in situations which involved both a *dhimmi* and a Muslim in which event the case would be tried before a Muslim court where the *dhimmi*'s testimony was unacceptable. Even when this contractual relationship of *dhimma* worked at its best, the position of the Jews and other *dhimmis* was far from enviable, and they were never more than second class citizens even though, unlike their co-religionists: Christian Europe, they had their place in the scheme of things. Usually however the position of the *dhimmi* was that of a persecuted, oppressed and despised minority. This was due, in part, to the fact that under the Ottoman Empire, for instance, there were many *dhimmis* who were effectively beyond the protection of the Sultan but who still had all the institutionalized disabilities of the *dhimmi*: the discriminatory legislation was enforced by local autonomous or semi-autonomous rulers but unlawful exactions were frequently made which made a nonsense of *dhimma*. In modern times, the shrinking of the area over which the Ottomans had fully effective control led to a deterioration in the general position of the Jews and other *dhimmis*. A growth in popular prejudice against the Jews based partly on the negative picture of the Jews painted in the Quran and partly on economic rivalries and

the money-lending activities of Jews in many parts of the Muslim world, led to them being abused and treated with contempt throughout the Muslim domains. In the middle of the 19th century, European influence in North Africa and the Middle East had serious repercussions for Jewish communities. On the one hand Jews were sometimes able to look to the representatives of European powers for legal and other protection; on the other, doctrinaire Christian anti-Semitism increasingly started to find its way into the Islamic lands. This process can best be perceived in the propagation of the blood libel which was more or less unknown in the Middle East (although endemic in Christian Europe) until 1840 when it made its first appearance in Damascus where it was introduced by local Greek Orthodox clerics spurred on by the French consul. Thereafter, scarcely a year passed by without the accusation of ritual murder being levelled at the Jews in some part of the Muslim world.

When Jews started settling in Palestine in any numbers in the second half of the 19th century, local Arab prejudice against the Jews was already quite deeply rooted. The resentment against the Zionist colonists derived something of its vigour from the xenophobia of the Muslim population of Syria and Palestine, something from the popular contempt for the Jew which already existed and something from the fear that their land was in the process of being taken over. This fear was complicated by a further element: traditionally the Jews had been treated with a sort of superstitious awe by certain sections of the Muslim populaces – they were viewed as a people with a peculiar access to magic – this may have been based upon their pre-eminent position in the medical profession in the Muslim world and upon their relatively high degree of literacy – and possessed of other supernatural and even demonic attributes. It has been argued that some of this traditional awe was transferred to the European Jews whose sophisticated western technology and novel social systems may have seemed to be the modern equivalent of supernatural abilities. At the same time quite different images of the Jew persisted: the obvious social and military competence of the new settlers seemed uncomfortably to contradict the old pre-conceived notions of cowardice and frail femininity which were often attributed to the despised Jew.

3: ANTI-ZIONISM

The circumstances surrounding the genesis of the Jewish State in the Middle East are such that opposition to its very existence on historical grounds has frequently been advanced. However the idea sometimes put forward by Jews that the denial of the idea of Jewish statehood is always in itself anti-Semitism by another name is not a particularly compelling one. In the first place there are many Jews who believe that the concept of Jewish statehood is opposed in a fundamental way to what they perceive as the Jewish mission in the world. The idea of the Jews being a nation like any other nation can be viewed as assimilationist in its essence and the objection of some orthodox Jews to the elaboration of such a tendency is not an unreasonable one from their point of view. On the other hand the opposition to Jewish nationalism on the part of the Palestinian Arabs whose own national aspirations concern the same territory is easy to understand. Anti-Zionism is not therefore necessarily anti-Semitism. At the same time it is clear that anti-Zionism can and frequently does derive a great deal of support from anti-Semitism and that sometimes anti-Zionism is in fact nothing other than anti-Semitism in a different guise.

Anti-Semitism has ceased to be a respectable ideology in the sense that it was in many parts of Europe towards the end of the 19th century, or as it was in Germany during the Third Reich. Hitler, it has been said, gave anti-Semitism a bad name. Thus attacks on the Jewish religion or on the supposed racial characteristics of the Jews are relatively few and far between or at any rate are not usually openly expressed. But attacks on Zionism are frequent, indeed remarkably frequent, and very often 'Zionism' seems intended to correspond to much more than the ideology of Jewish nationalism or support for the Jewish State. Zionism has become one of the most detested ideologies in many parts of the world: particularly in Third World countries, in the Eastern Bloc and among left-wing and radical elements in much of Europe and America. In many cases support for the anti-Zionist position can be seen as arising out of a more general sympathy for the Third World and its

problems. Indeed the anti-Zionist creed has become a prime shibboleth of solidarity with a wide range of left-wing or radical causes. This is, in part, because Zionism has become equated with both racism and imperialism.

As Zionism is patently neither imperialist or racist in the accepted senses of those words it is remarkable that it should have been identified as such by so many people. It is also remarkable how much space in the media of, for instance, the Soviet Union, or in the debates of various organs of the United Nations, is devoted to attacks on Zionism. Similarly how can one explain the enthusiastic espousal of anti-Zionism in Third World countries where Jewish and Middle Eastern affairs are at best only dimly comprehended? And how can one explain the tendency which is widespread in the Muslim World to view Zionism as a supremely rich, powerful and malevolent international conspiracy, bent on world domination with its tentacles ready to crush whatever lies in its path?

From a Muslim point of view it is clear that Zionism can represent a great deal more than a simple nationalist movement. When Israel won its War of Independence in 1948 an area which had traditionally (and certainly since the time of the Crusades except for the brief period of British rule) been part of *Dar ul-Islam* (the territory of Islam) was lost to a *dhimmi* nation. And whereas over the centuries Islam had every reason to become inured to Christian or at any rate European political and military successes, the idea of a Jewish military and political success over the combined might of the majority of the Arab States seemed incomprehensible. Conspiracy theories centred on Zionism were one way of explaining the inexplicable and excusing the inexcusable – the defeat of proud if not invincible Islam. In the years following Israel's successive victories European anti-Semitic ideas were increasingly introduced into the repertoire of anti-Israel polemic which was also informed by the anti-Jewish traditions and prejudices of the Islamic world. Blood libels were alluded to; grossly anti-Semitic caricatures were propagated in the Arab press and even in school text books, and Arabic translations of the classic texts of European anti-Semitism were disseminated. Of particular significance was the Arabic version of the '*Protocols of the Elders of Zion*' whose very title tied it to Zionism. Until after the Yom Kippur War this Arab anti-Semitism was generally for home consumption, though naturally it caused problems for the Jews living in Arab territories and was one of the principal causes of the emigration of the vast majority of Jews in Arab or Muslim countries. After the oil crisis of the 1970s the Arab States started disseminating anti-Semitic literature abroad: indeed some Arab and other Islamic States have become the greatest producers of anti-Semitic literature in the contemporary world. At the same time Arab propaganda against Israel, at the UN and elsewhere, often tinged, at the very least, with scarcely-veiled elements of anti-Semitism, has gone some way to create the idea of Israel as a pariah State.

The anti-Zionism which declares that the Jewish State is anathema and that its policies render it completely unacceptable to the community of nations has been seen by many Jews as the latest form of anti-Semitism. The pariah status imposed upon Jews in Europe which was to lead to the murder of six million of them, has now been transferred they would argue, to the whole Jewish nation as represented by the State of Israel. This view depends, to an extent, on the idea, accepted by many Jews, that anti-Semitism is an inevitable and constant world force which if suppressed in one form will rapidly adopt new and more pernicious manifestations. Anti-Zionism, then, they view as the successor to earlier forces of anti-Jewish prejudice. But in terms of explaining anti-Zionism we cannot ignore the ferocity of feeling generated in many countries of the world and among left wing circles in many others, against colonialism and imperialism, and in particular against the United States as the chief supporter of these two evils. As Zionism, wrongly in many respects, is considered as yet another form of European colonialism, some anti-Zionist sentiment could perhaps be better understood as belonging to this powerful anti-American and anti-Imperialist pool of feeling notwithstanding its anti-Semitic colouring. For the moment it can be said that the phenomenon of anti-Zionism has yet to be fully explained or fully understood. But the attacks on Jewish targets in Europe and elsewhere by Palestinian terrorists and other anti-Zionist groups has contributed to an increasing fear among Jews that attacks on Israel can just as easily take the form of attacks on Jews: and that seems to them remarkably like anti-Semitism.

* One of the hallmarks of modern anti-Semitism is its appeal, for contradictory reasons, to both left and right.

Since mediaeval times and beyond, the Jew has in some sense been central to the Christian view of the world. The same was not true of Islam. The links between Judaism and Islam were more remote than those between Judaism and Christianity (although, as Mr L.J. Tamman comments, the Jewish religion is closer to Islam than Christianity in several of its beliefs and laws. When Jews were expelled from Spain and Portugal in 1492, some converted to the Muslim religion). For Islam there was no 'mystery of Israel' nor did final redemption depend upon the conversion and restoration of the Jewish people. In addition, in the Islamic lands the Jews were just one of many religious minorities whereas in Christian Europe the Jews were the minority *par excellence* – the only non-Christian 'foreigners' most Europeans would ever see. Over the last half century this situation has changed. Israel, and to an extent the Jewish people, have become the greatest enemies of Islam; Christian-inspired anti-Semitism has spread throughout the Islamic world and beyond to other non-Christian countries. Whereas Jews were once central to Christian speculation about the world, they have now become the focus of the speculations of much of the rest of the world. Inevitably these developments have had a considerable impact upon the present-day Jewish communities of Asia and Africa, which are next examined in more detail.*

ESTIMATED CONTEMPORARY JEWISH POPULATION FIGURES IN ASIA AND AFRICA

ALGERIA	400
EGYPT	250
ETHIOPIA	15,000 – 26,000
HONG KONG	800
INDIA (excluding Shinlung)	5,400
IRAN	15,000 – 20,000
IRAQ	200 – 300
JAPAN	500 – 600
KENYA	100
LEBANON	50 – 100
MOROCCO	17,000 – 18,000
PHILIPPINES	200
SINGAPORE	200 – 300
SOUTH AFRICA	110,000
SYRIA	5,000 – 6,000
THAILAND	200
TUNISIA	3,000
YEMEN	1,000 – 5,000
ZAIRE	200
ZAMBIA	300
ZIMBABWE	500

4: ASIA

SYRIA ‡

A tradition of the Jews of Syria has it that since the time of King Ahab of Israel there have always been Jews in Damascus. Certainly throughout Old Testament times Damascus had a large Jewish population and by the time of Herod had become an important centre of Jewish life. After the Muslim conquest of A.D. 635 Jews continued to live in their traditional quarters in the south-east corner of the city of Damascus. The Islamic heyday of the community came in the 10th century when a Jew, al-Qazzaz, became the head of the financial administration of the whole of Fatimid Syria. Under the Mamluks who were to rule Syria from 1250 to 1516 the Jews suffered various forms of discrimination: *inter alia* they were forbidden to ride horses or mules and were only permitted to ride donkeys sidesaddle. In order to comply with the Islamic ruling requiring non-Muslims to be dressed in such a way that they could be readily differentiated from Muslims, Jews were

made to wear yellow turbans while Jewish women were required to wear one red and one black shoe. Similarly Jewish men had to blow on a special whistle every time they entered a public bath house.

The fortunes of the Jewish community of Damascus reached their lowest ebb during the second half of the 18th and the first half of the 19th century. Ordinary Jews were persecuted as a matter of course. Even Jews who had the protection of great wealth or influence were not immune. The reversals experienced by some of the Jewish grandees were remarkable: as one traveller put it: 'At one time the Jew would be the actual ruler of Syria, and then in a few weeks he would be stripped of fortune, and perhaps cruelly mutilated, or even murdered'. In 1840 the Jews suffered particularly as a result of what came to be known as the Damascus Affair: the Jews were accused of murdering a Capuchin friar and using his blood for the manufacture of Passover bread. As we have seen above this is perhaps the first time that this weapon of doctrinaire Christian European anti-Semitism had been used in the Muslim Arab world – although the charge was to be levelled against the Jews of the Middle East frequently throughout the rest of the 19th century. In the second half of that century the legal position of the Syrian Jews gradually improved – probably as a result of pressure from Europe. The Ottoman government introduced a series of reforms known as the *Tanzimat* which gave the Jews virtual equality before the law. But by the end of the century for largely economic reasons many Jews started leaving Syria to settle elsewhere.

In 1947, at the time of the Israeli War of Independence, there were about 30,000 Jews in Syria. But a wave of hostility towards Israel culminating in officially orchestrated riots in Aleppo and Damascus left hundreds of Jewish homes and several ancient synagogues in ruins. Many Jews were killed. Of the rest, 15,000 fled the country, many of them finding their way to Israel. A further 10,000 were able to leave between 1948 and the early 1960s during periods when restrictions on emigration were temporarily lifted. But since then there has been a continuous ban on Jewish emigration: the Syrians argue that they have no wish to supply the Zionist enemy with more potential troops. In a letter dated 12 December 1978, the President of the French Senate, Alain Poher – who still holds that post – wrote to the then United Nations Secretary-General about this community: 'By its treatment of the Jews in its territory, Syria is constantly and methodically violating the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, to which it acceded on 21 April 1969. The 4500 Jews of Syria residing at Damascus, Qamishli and Aleppo are treated like hostages and cannot leave the country even to receive medical care.' From time to time some Jews are now allowed to go abroad on brief visits for family, health or business reasons, but they are required to deposit large sums of money with the authorities and to leave behind immediate members of their family to guarantee their return. Thus, the majority of those who have left Syria over the last twenty years have done so illegally. According to some sources several dozen Jews a year manage to escape, usually over the border into Turkey. The dangers involved in emigrating in this way are obviously great and many have died in the attempt. Nonetheless, entire families have escaped. Naturally the majority of those who opt for this route are young men who leave alone or in small groups. Consequently, there are in Damascus several hundred more Jewish women of marriageable age than there are men. In recognition of this problem in 1977 President Hafez al-Assad permitted 14 unmarried Jewish women to leave Syria and emigrate to the United States as a concession following the personal intervention of President Carter. Now there are only some 5600 Jews in Syria: 4500 in Damascus, 1000 in Aleppo and a few dozen families in Qamishli, a small town beyond the Euphrates on the border with Turkey.

The Jews are not the only oppressed group in Syria. In many respects, however, the situation of the Jews is even worse than that of other groups such as the Kurds or the Armenians (see MRG Reports 23 and 32 respectively). Many of the difficulties encountered by other sections of Syrian society are at least in part the result of Assad's heavy-handed attempts to create a modern, secular state in which traditional divisions will play no part. The Jews are excluded from this process. The authorities attempt to play down the differences between Kurd and Arab or between Shiite and Sunni, but there is no desire to play down the separateness of the Jew. The restrictions on them leaving the country are more rigorously enforced than is the case with others. Until 1977 the identity papers of Jews were stamped in red with the term *Musawi* (of the Mosaic faith). In the remote town of Qamishli '*Musawi*' is daubed in red on the outside of Jews' houses. In practice, as part of the campaign to minimize sectarian and ethnic differences, the religious affiliations of other Syrians are not noted on their identity papers, and certainly not in red, and in no cases on the outside of their homes. In 1977 reforms were introduced whereby the designation *Musawi* in red ink on Jews' driving licences, identity cards, passports and bank documents was done away with, only to be replaced by a

smaller entry in blue. Jews are not permitted to work in the government services, in any of the nationalized industries, the army or the police force. The access of young Jews to the universities is severely restricted and departments of science and technology are now more or less closed to them. A dozen or so Jews of the older generation are doctors and chemists, but more than 95% of the male Jews in employment are tradesmen and artisans. As Jews are considered to be potential spies for Israel, they are not allowed to have contact with foreigners. There are *Muhabarat* (Syrian secret police) check-points controlling the areas of Damascus and Aleppo where Jews live. The agents who patrol these neighbourhoods harass the Jews and allegedly engage in extortion, bribery and rape. By and large the non-Jewish inhabitants of Aleppo and Damascus avoid the Jewish quarters for fear of getting into trouble themselves.

The vulnerability of the Jewish communities was highlighted in 1984 by the savage murder and mutilation of a young Aleppo Jewish woman called Lily Abadi and her children. Her husband, Hayyim Abadi, a jeweller, received a telephone call in his office and was told of terrible acts that had been perpetrated against his wife. Having returned home he discovered that his wife had been shot and stabbed, her breasts cut, her stomach slit open and the unborn child killed. Her son was dead: his arms had been broken. The girl was dead and had been repeatedly slashed by a knife. Subsequently other members of the Jewish community had received threatening telephone calls warning them that they would be next. The murder was all the more surprising because of the tight security surrounding Jamiliyya – Aleppo's Jewish quarter. The Syrian authorities insisted that the killing constituted a criminal act but had no political significance. The local Jews were not so sure: some felt that the *Muhabarat* were responsible, others that it was the work of the Muslim Brotherhood. If this incident is an act of exceptional savagery there are few Jews in Syria who do not have some personal experience of beating, torture or extortion. Nonetheless they feel that despite everything the present situation is not unbearable and in some sense they look upon President Assad as their protector. What they all fear is that the present régime will be replaced by a Muslim fundamentalist one along Iranian lines. Such a régime, the Jews of Syria believe, would pose a mortal threat to the continued survival of their ancient community.*

THE YEMEN

Between 1919 and 1948 some 16,000 Jews emigrated from the Yemen to Palestine. In 1948/9 Operation Magic Carpet transported a further 43,000 while about 2000 left between 1950/54. Until recently it was thought that there were very few Jewish families left (the 1982 US Congressional Human Rights Report put the figure at 5-600) but recent evidence suggests that there are several thousand Jews in North Yemen – mainly around Najran near the Saudi border. They still live as *dhimmi*s with all the restrictions and discriminations implicit in that state: they still pay the *jizya* (poll tax for non-Muslims). They have different identity papers from Muslims and can be readily distinguished by their special dress. The government actively discourages contact between local Jews and Jewish communities elsewhere. In 1980 two black American Christians who met Jews in the Yemen and offered to contact relatives of theirs in Israel were imprisoned for a year and, according to the *New York Times*, tortured. There have been unconfirmed reports that some Jews in the Yemen have been forced to convert to Islam.

IRAQ

The Jews of Iraq have all but disappeared: 120,000, practically the whole community, left for Israel in 1951 in the exodus code-named Operation Ezra and Nehemiah. It has been suggested that certain anti-Jewish outrages at this time were perpetrated by Zionist agents with the intention of encouraging the emigration. In any event the memory of mass attacks by Muslims on the Jews was still fresh enough to act as a spur. In 1941 at the time of the collapse of the pro-German Rashid 'Ali revolt at least 600 Jews were killed by the mob in Baghdad while an even greater number of houses and businesses were destroyed. In 1952, 6000 Jews were left in Iraq although many of these went in 1958 when King Faisal was assassinated and a republic declared. The fate of those who chose to stay on was highlighted by the execution of nine Jews in Baghdad's Liberation Square in 1969 on charges of being Zionists and spying for Israel. In 1972 more Jews were arrested: 20 were murdered and 16 'disappeared'. In 1972/3 most of the remainder fled the country. Now there are no more than 2-300 Jews in Iraq of whom the majority live in Baghdad with a smaller community in

* There are in addition believed to be a very few Jews remaining in the Lebanon.

Basrah. Some of the Jews are still active in business; others are government employees and teachers. Since the outbreak of the war with Iran the Jews have been left to their own devices and as far as is known have not been maltreated. Few of the remaining Jews seem to want to leave Iraq: many of them are elderly. But, as elsewhere in the Islamic world, Iraq's Jews are hostages to future developments.

IRAN

Jews have been living in the area covered by contemporary Iran for two and a half thousand years. For centuries Persian Jews distinguished themselves as gold and silver smiths, weavers and dyers and as wine makers and spice dealers. From the 10th century Jewish moneylenders started playing a significant role alongside Jewish traders who for centuries were an important element in the trade between the Mediterranean and ultimately India and China. In the 13th century under Hulagu Khan the Jews experienced a brief period of equality with their Muslim neighbours: during this period certain Jews achieved high political office and a specifically Jewish culture and particularly literature flourished. But under the Safawid Dynasty (1502-1736) with the establishment of Shi'ism as the State religion the Jews began to suffer intense persecution brought about in part by the concept of the uncleanliness of unbelievers which was to become the basis of the State's attitude towards non-Muslims. In the 17th century the nadir of the community's fortunes was reached when Shah Abbas forcibly converted the entire community. Although they were soon enough permitted to return to their ancestral faith, during the 18th and 19th centuries and particularly under the Kajar Dynasty (1794-1925) persecution of Jews continued. In the early part of this century many of the mediaeval restrictions upon Jewish life were done away with and under the Pahlevi Dynasty (1925-1979) the Jews continued to experience improved conditions.

After 1948, with the establishment of the State of Israel, about 28,000 Iranian Jews, prompted in part by the collective memory of periodic persecution emigrated to the Jewish State. Some of the 70-80,000 who remained, prospered under the Pahlevi régime and Jewish emigration to Israel or elsewhere became a negligible factor: indeed some 3000 of those who had emigrated earlier returned to Iran during these years.

Although the Ayatollah Khomeini had announced from Paris that the Islamic revolution would bring no harm to the Jews, who would be treated as *dhimmi* people in accordance with Sharia law, with the overthrow of the Shah in 1979 many Jews decided to leave the country. During the revolution El Al planes were permitted to fly into Tehran's Mehrabad Airport and evacuate those members of the Jewish community who wished to leave: a number of those who left at this time were wealthy businessmen. However, it was not long before the doors were closed and the remaining Jews found themselves prevented from leaving and caught up in the perplexing ambiguities of the 'Government of Allah'. Khomeini's anti-Jewish views are well known: in the foreword to his book on Islamic government he wrote 'The Islamic movement was afflicted by the Jews from its very beginning, when they began their activity by distorting the reputation of Islam and by defaming and maligning it. This has continued to the present day.' Iranian rhetoric frequently asserts that the war against Iraq is no more than the first stage in the greater struggle to liberate Jerusalem and drive the Jews into the sea. Inevitably, Khomeini's passionate hatred for Israel often referred to as 'Little Satan' and for historical Jewry began to colour the general attitude of the revolution towards the local 'protected' Jews. Zionism is considered a crime punishable by death. Shortly after the revolution Habib Elghanian, the extremely wealthy president of the Jewish community in Tehran was executed on the grounds of being a Zionist and having 'connections with Israel' and shortly afterwards a number of other community figures (Ibrahim Beroukheim, Albert Danielpour, Nosrat Guwell, Jalal Massarrat, Jamshid Yadegar) were executed by summary trial on similar charges. After the seizure of the American Embassy in November 1979 Revolutionary Guards and Islamic Committees began harassing Jews in Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz, Hamadan and Kashan. Traditionally, and particularly under the Shah, the Jews had played a vital economic role: this became increasingly unacceptable to the authorities. Jews whose business interests had been 'un-Islamic' such as bankers or liquor merchants were imprisoned: in 1982 there were said to be 350 Jews in jail for 'economic crimes'. Others found difficulties in obtaining the necessary licences for manufacturing, trading and other commercial activities. Jewish businesses were taken over by workers' committees (*Komites*); university teachers were dismissed; government employment was closed to non-Muslims. There have been numerous reports of Jewish property being confiscated by Islamic *Komites*, of Jews being expelled from official positions and of Jews being beaten and tortured as a matter of routine. Many have been arrested as a means of extorting money from their families. One refugee was reported in the

* This Report does not include any discussion of the Jews of Israel who form by far the largest Asian community. MRG hopes to produce a future Report examining contemporary anti-Semitism in Europe and the Americas.

‡ The country studies which follow are arranged broadly to follow the order of the diaspora.

New York Times (17.11.86) as saying: 'The Mullahs in charge of Evin prison did not bother to read the charges against most of the imprisoned, but instead immediately divided them into two groups – those able to buy their way out and those unable. Those unable to pay are sentenced to whatever the Mullahs feel like – life for this one, death to another.' According to the Director of HIAS (the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) in Vienna, two-thirds of the Jewish refugees from Iran had at one time or another been tortured or physically maltreated. Nonetheless, all Jewish refugees stress that although the Jews are somewhat worse off than other minorities against all of whom systematic discrimination is practised, even the Jews are considerably better off than members of the Baha'i faith, regarded by Iranian Shi'ites as heretics, who have been fiercely persecuted.*

In 1983, several hundred Jews in Tehran were arrested by Revolutionary Guards one Friday evening while leaving the synagogue. They were held in Evin prison and released the following day. But generally there have been few obstacles put in the way of the normal practice of the Jewish religion. Jewish schools have been taken over by the Ministry of Education and religious instruction (i.e. Judaism) is compulsory. However, there have been reports that Islamic Committees have taken control of certain Jewish schools, and, in certain cases, have tried forcibly to convert young Jews to Islam. The teaching of Hebrew has been banned and Jewish students in normal schools are forced to chant 'Death to Israel' before entering school every day.

Although there are no reliable statistics on Iran, by the end of 1979 it is thought that there were c. 75,000 Jews still in the country. The general restrictions on leaving Iran were applied more strictly to the Jews than to other groups. Any Jew managing to acquire an official exit permit is required to leave behind a guarantor for his return and a considerable sum of money, or in some cases property, which is forfeit should he fail to come back. Whole families are never permitted to travel together and only in rare circumstances are married couples. The issue of travel permits to non-Muslims is administered in a different way to that of other Iranians: at various times the Ministry of Security, the Prime Minister's Office and the Prosecutor's Office have been responsible for the passports and exit permits of non-Muslims. It is only in the most exceptional circumstances that permits are given.

Since the revolution, hundreds of thousands of Iranians (some estimates put the figure as high as half a million) have managed to flee their country. During the same period it is thought that 50-55,000 Jews have escaped. Official Israeli sources deny this and claim that there are still 50-60,000 Jews in Iran. Jewish refugees from Iran maintain that there are now no more than 15-20,000 and that many of those left behind are elderly people who have resigned themselves to dying in the country of their birth. The movement of Jews from Iran has taken place overland, via Turkey, although refugees are reluctant to give any details about routes. One Jew claimed to have crossed the border with his family on a camel. Others crossed in private cars or buses. Some Jews have been killed crossing the border: those caught have been severely tortured. There have been unconfirmed rumours of secret airlifts and other Israeli involvement in this exodus but all such rumours have been denied vigorously by Israel. However, it is known that very few Iranian Jews leave Iran with official exit permits and papers and very few fly out of Iran on normal carriers. On 28 December 1985 the Kuwait paper *Al-Ra'y al-'Amm* reported that large numbers of Jews had recently been permitted to emigrate from Iran to Israel via a European country. The report stressed that this was the first time since 1979 that Jews had been permitted to leave in such numbers. In the second half of 1980 800 Iranian refugees are known to have arrived in Israel and during the same period 70-80 refugees were arriving every week at refugee centres in Vienna. The fact that this flow of Jewish refugees coincided with the flow of arms from Israel to Iran has led some observers to conclude that the two phenomena are not unconnected and that the not unprecedented Israeli trade of 'arms for Jews' was one of the factors that prompted Israel to participate in the shipment of American arms to Iran.

In 1986 the one Jewish representative in the Iranian parliament was arrested on what are thought to be trumped-up charges of 'sexual abuse'. By the beginning of 1987 there were thought to be some 500 Jews held in Iranian prisons on charges, for the most part, of being Zionists. Nonetheless, Jewish refugees from Iran maintain that for the moment the situation is not out of hand and that there is not yet an out-and-out campaign of terror against the Jews. In general terms, what appears to be happening is that Iran's Shi'ite theocracy is intent on ensuring that Iran's Jews are treated in the same way as *dhimmis* were traditionally treated under Islam: as a despised yet 'protected' people upon whom rested numerous restrictions. The régime's hatred for Israel, however, is so extreme that Jews in Iran have suffered, and are likely to suffer more because of Zionism than as Jews. Whereas some

lip service is paid to a distinction between Jew and Zionist by the Mullahs, in practical terms such distinctions are blurred whenever it is thought necessary. The situation is further complicated by a distinct lack of ideological homogeneity both in the present Iranian government and among the officers and ideologues of the revolution throughout the country. It is known that some Mullahs insist that Jews must be treated as traditional *dhimmis* whereas others take a more extreme and anti-Semitic stand.

A considerable amount of anti-Semitic literature has been published in Iran over the last few years. One journal, *Imam*, which has been circulated in western countries from Iranian diplomatic missions carries the most blatant anti-Semitism including lengthy excerpts from the 'Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion'. This 'classic' anti-Semitic literature is presented side by side with equally rabid articles alleging a Zionist conspiracy to undermine the western powers and western values. It seems apparent that in the case of Iran there is a considerable overlap between a form of anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism: the extent to which this overlap affects Jews in Iran depends upon local conditions, particularly as we have seen, the lack of ideological homogeneity of the present government officials and cadres. But with the dramatic reduction in their numbers, and the loss of their traditional leadership and persistent economic and physical persecution it seems clear that Iran's Jews face an uncertain future.

INDIA

There are three distinct main Jewish communities in India: the Cochins, the Bene Israel and the Baghdadis. Perhaps the best known is the Jewish community of Cochin in south India, which lays claim to having arrived in the sub-continent after the destruction of the first Temple. The Malayalam-speaking Cochin Jews formed three separate endogenous groups: the White Jews, the Black Jews and the *Meshuhrarim* (freedmen). The fair-skinned White Jews represent a mixture of the indigenous Indian Jews and those European and Middle Eastern Jews who, like the Portuguese and the Dutch, found their way to the tip of the sub-continent over the centuries. The Black Jews are, in most respects, indistinguishable from local Indians and maintained separate synagogues and a separate social life. The *Meshuhrarim*, descendants of Indian slaves who had converted to the religion of their Jewish masters, were attached to both groups. Unlike the Bene Israel, the Cochini Jews never lost contact with mainstream Judaism, not least because of the importance of the ports of south India for the trade between East and West which assured a constant flow of visitors from Europe and the Middle East. Judaeo-Arabic documents found in the depository (*genizah*) of an 8th-century Cairo synagogue have shown that between the 10th and 12th centuries strong commercial ties existed between the Cochin Jews and Mediterranean and Middle Eastern Jewish communities. The Cochin Jews prospered at the time of Marco Polo. They also have the earliest documentary evidence of the association of the Jews with India. A copper inscription still in the hands of the few remaining White Jews describes privileges granted to a certain Joseph Raban, thought to be the leader of the Jewish community of Cochin, by the Hindu ruler of Malabar around the end of the 9th century A.D. By 1948 there were 2500 Cochin Jews of whom only a hundred were White Jews, but since then emigration mainly to Israel has reduced the community to no more than a handful. The only persecution of the Cochin Jews significantly took place during the rule of the Christian Portuguese in the 16th century.

The Bene Israel of west India believe that their ancestors left Palestine as a result of the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes (175-165 B.C.) although some of them claim that their forebears were one of the lost tribes of Israel. But even though the real origins of the Bene Israel are obscure, it seems clear that the community is an ancient one. According to tradition their ancestors arrived by sea 'from somewhere in the north' and were shipwrecked near Navagaon, some twenty miles south of Bombay Island. Seven women and seven men survived the shipwreck and established the community in the surrounding villages. For centuries they lived in isolation on the Konkan coastland, and the outside world was unaware of the presence of Jews in western India until the middle of the 18th century, by which time many of them had moved from the Konkan to Bombay. Thereafter, the Bene Israel were 'discovered' by a white Cochini Jew, David Rahabi, a member of the eminent Rahabi family, and also by the American Missionary Society which was responsible for publishing among other things a Hebrew Grammar and the book of Genesis and Exodus in Marathi, the language of the Bene Israel. At the time of their discovery, the only Hebrew of which they still had any knowledge was the first word of the elemental Hebrew prayer *Shema Israel* – 'Hear O Israel, the Lord our god, the Lord is one'. But Rahabi perceived many vestiges of ancient Jewish practices. The Bene Israel kept the Sabbath, maintained a number of festivals and fasts, and observed some of the Jewish dietary

laws. For Rahabi the acid test of their Jewishness was that he gave the women some fish to cook including some which lacked scales and fins and which are, therefore, prohibited under the laws of *kashrut*; these the Bene Israel women refused to touch. Persuaded that they were indeed Jews, Rahabi suggested certain reforms to them and over the next decades they made great efforts to bring their customs into line with orthodox Jewish practice elsewhere. It is remarkable that, despite their separation from world Jewry, the Bene Israel managed to cling to at least some aspects of their religion for perhaps as long as 2000 years.

In 1951 there were some 20,000 Bene Israel in India. In the 1950s many thousands emigrated to Israel where their identification with Israel was disputed. The exodus was brought about largely by excitement over the idea of a Jewish State and partly by the fear that there would be no place for the Bene Israel in the new India. In the past, after all, they had been somewhat favoured by the British. There are now no more than 5000 Bene Israel in India.

Traditionally the Bene Israel were the oil pressers of the Konkan area where they were known as *shanwar teli* or Saturday oil pressers on the grounds that Saturday was the one day when they did *not* press oil. Throughout the centuries the Bene Israel became more or less integrated into the Hindu caste system. They were a tiny minority – an infinitesimally small piece of the jigsaw of Indian society which was held in place by the mass of other pieces. But with the gradual and partial disintegration of the old order, the pressure is lessening and it is becoming increasingly difficult for the Bene Israel to maintain a separate existence. At the same time, notwithstanding centuries of Hindu tolerance, the Jews are now occasionally made to feel responsible for the various policies of Israel, not all of which find general support in India. Thus, despite the fact that many Bene Israel have done remarkably well, and despite the fact that India for a variety of reasons continues to offer a tolerant atmosphere in which they can flourish, the eyes of most Bene Israel, and certainly the young among them, are turned towards Israel and other western countries. It is widely predicted among the Bene Israel that by the end of the century the community will no longer exist.

The most recent of the Jewish communities in India is the group of Jews of Middle Eastern and mainly Iraqi origin, based chiefly in Bombay, known as the Baghdadis. The first Middle Eastern Jew to put down roots in Bombay and arguably therefore the founder of the Baghdadi community was Shalom ben Ovadiah ha-Cohen, a trader from Aleppo, who arrived in Bombay in 1790. In the early decades of the 19th century he was joined by other Arabic-speaking Jews from Basra, Aleppo and the Yemen and particularly from the great Jewish centre in Baghdad. But it was only with the arrival in 1832 of the legendary David Sassoon, who was to become the fabulously successful head of a great trading empire, that the community fully established itself in west India. As white non-Indians, the Baghdadis enjoyed a special status under the Raj and, until the end of British rule in India, the community enjoyed considerable prosperity. But despite the fact that the Jews in India had never suffered from anti-Semitism and despite their material prosperity, after Indian independence in 1947 many of the community left. Although some were attracted to the new Jewish State, the majority went to Australia, the United States and Britain. The reasons that drew them away were many, but most felt that as Whites they would be discriminated against in the new Indianized India. New restrictive laws on the export of capital and import of luxury items made their traditional role as international traders difficult to maintain. Today there are no more than 300-400 Baghdadis left in India, almost all of them concentrated in Bombay.

Mention should also be made of groups of self-proclaimed Jews in India's eastern border regions. These 'Jews' mainly belong to the Shinlung tribe, most of whom are to be found in the Chin State of Burma, while others live in Manipur, Tripura, Assam and Mizoram and the Chittagong hill districts of Bangladesh. The usual name for the Shinlung in India is Kuki and in Burma, Chin. But traditionally they have preferred to refer to themselves by the names of their specific tribes such as Thaduo, Paite, Hmar and Simte. The name Shinlung has been adopted as a means for these separate tribes to achieve a degree of common identity. They all share the tradition that their remote ancestors came from *sinlung* – the Chin-Kuki word for a cave – although some of them explain that *sinlung* means 'closed valley'.

At the heart of the Shinlung's identification with Judaism lies the conviction that all the two million Chin-Kuki tribal people are descendants of one of the lost tribes of Israel. According to the beliefs of the Shinlung their common ancestor was Manmasi, who they claim was none other than Manasseh, the son of Joseph. According to the Shinlung, the tribe of Manasseh settled in Persia from where they were driven to Afghanistan and finally to China. Around 600 A.D. religious persecution forced them to leave China and they settled in Vietnam. Some seven hundred years later they moved on to Aupatung in Burma, from where they spilled over into north-east India.

The Shinlung were converted from their ancestral faith by Baptist missionaries 150 years ago, and by Welsh Presbyterians in the 1890s. Until then they claim they had maintained certain Jewish practices: they had a supreme god called Pathien; believed in a sort of heaven and hell; they had practised animal sacrifice, draining the blood from the slaughtered beasts before they were consumed; a day of atonement had figured prominently in their calendar; a special blessing had been said over a male child on the eighth day – the day when Jewish boys are circumcised; and they had worn a variety of blue and white *tzitzit* – the fringed undergarment worn by male Jews.

The move to conversion to Judaism started in south-western Manipur and has since spread throughout the area. A number of synagogues have been established, particularly in the area around Imphal, and thousands of people have joined the movement. It is still gaining adherents at a remarkable rate. A number of Shinlung have travelled to Bombay where they have gained instruction in aspects of modern Jewish liturgy and ritual, and two Manipur Jews have married other Jews in Bombay. The most obvious explanation of this phenomenon is a desire on the part of a people who were traditionally outside the Hindu caste system and who have joined it late, at the bottom, to opt out in as a dramatic a way as possible. This desire may have been fanned by stories of groups such as the Bene Israel being helped to emigrate to the 'Promised Land' – a concept which they already were familiar with through the Christian missionaries' Old Testament teaching. There seems to be no persecution of these new 'converts' to Judaism.

SINGAPORE AND MALAYSIA

When Sir Thomas Raffles of the East India Company acquired the right to establish a trading station in Singapore in 1819, and subsequently bought the island, Jewish merchants were among the first to establish trading links with the new entrepôt. By the mid-1840s there were six registered Jewish trading houses and the following years saw a sharp increase in the Jewish population of the island mainly of Jews from Iraq. A number of the early settlers were startlingly successful. According to one contemporary source they soon owned villas and gardens overlooking the new town and had servants, ritual slaughterers, and teachers for their children. By the 1870s there were c. 200 Jews on the island many of whom joined in the growing prosperity of Singapore. Their success owed something to the fact that from the first they had adopted English as their language of education and to some extent this helped their relations with the British. By the end of the 19th century Jews owned a great deal of the real estate of Singapore and still did so by the time of World War II. There are numerous streets and estates with Jewish names to this day: Synagogue Street, Solomon Street, Meyer Road, Nathan Street, etc.

By no means all of the Jews were wealthy. Some were bakers, small merchants and characteristically hawkers who sold their goods in mainland Malaya as well as North Borneo and Sarawak. During the Japanese occupation of the island the Jews were eventually interned but were not particularly badly treated. After the war the establishment of a communist régime in China which, among other things, had the effect of destroying the largest community in the Far East in Shanghai was seen by many Singapore Jews as marking the end of the stability which enabled them to engage in international trade. At the same time the break-up of the colonial régimes threatened the links between West and East without which much of their trade would be impossible. Before the war the community numbered 2000: now there are 2-300 and the community looks likely to disappear before the end of the century. There are communities of Singapore Jews in Sydney, Perth, Los Angeles and London. The main reason for the continuing emigration is that for the younger members of the community, as in for instance India and Syria, there is not a large enough pool of potential marriage partners.

Under the British, notwithstanding the colour of their skin, the Jews were discriminated against as a matter of course. Even the wealthiest Jews were denied full access to British society. There is some irony in the fact that the movement for independence was in part led by a Jew – David Marshall – who became the Island's first Chief Minister. Now there is no anti-Jewish discrimination. As a community the Jews bask in the approval of their fellow citizens. Their enormous contribution to the island's history and development has been disproportionate to their numbers: they have never been more than a tiny minority. But a common Chinese Singaporean reaction is to assume that now there are not 2-300 but tens if not hundreds of thousands of Jews resident in the republic.

* See MRG Report 51 *The Baha'is of Iran*.

The positive attitude shown towards Jews in Singapore contrasts starkly with the anti-Semitic stance sometimes taken by elements within the Malaysian government. Although as a Muslim country Malaysia can be expected to have anti-Zionist sympathies, in fact these sympathies sometimes go further than that – allegedly partly as a result of Libyan pressure. In 1984 the New York Philharmonic, on tour in Malaysia, was prevented from playing a work by Ernst Bloch, a Jewish composer. Notwithstanding the fact that there are no longer more than two or three Jews in Malaysia (although there were once small communities in Kuala Lumpur and Penang) anti-Semitism has in the past surfaced in political speeches and pamphlets: the Prime Minister Datuk Sere Dr. Mahathir Mohammed, for example, has decried what he views as the Jewish domination of European businesses and the American press. The November 1986 visit to Singapore of Israel's President Herzog led Malaysia to threaten breaking off relations with the island republic. The incident led to a good deal of concern being expressed in Malaysia as well as in Indonesia and Brunei over the 'Zionist threat': a number of articles and public utterances were couched in terms of traditional western anti-Semitic stereotypes.

HONG KONG

There have been Jews in Hong Kong since the Crown Colony's cession to Great Britain in 1842. The Sassoons, Iraqi Jews who were already making a name for themselves in India and who came to be known as 'the Rothschilds of the East', and the Kadoories who are still an influential family in Hong Kong, established offices in the Colony. Both families brought out Iraqi Jews to work in their various enterprises. Thus by the turn of the century there were c. 100 mainly Sephardi Jews. The Jewish community of Shanghai which numbered 25-30,000 at the beginning of World War II disappeared almost completely with the rise of the communist régime in China. Some of the Shanghai Jews, most of them of Russian origin, settled in Hong Kong. There are c. 800 Jews in Hong Kong from twenty-two different countries; but most of them are there on a temporary basis as businessmen working on the China trade for European and American companies or as diplomats. A considerable proportion of the permanent Jewish community will leave Hong Kong when it reverts to Chinese rule in 1997. There has been no discrimination against the Jews in Hong Kong.

CHINA

There have been Jews in China since at least 1163 when the first synagogue was built in Kaifeng. By the time of the Ming dynasty the Jews began to excel particularly as bureaucrats: this led to them being posted throughout the empire and this contributed to a process of assimilation. By the mid-19th century the ancient Kaifeng community had largely assimilated to the local population although a number of Jewish rites and practices were still maintained. There are today an unknown number of Chinese people of Jewish descent in Kaifeng: they are reportedly proud to proclaim their Jewishness not least because of the relationship their Jewish descent gives them with Karl Marx. The Jews of Kaifeng are recognized by the government as a small and distinct ethnic group and as such are granted exemption from China's rigorously enforced birth control regulations. There is no anti-Semitism in China.

THE PHILIPPINES

Although a number of Marranos (crypto-Jews in Spain and Portugal) are known to have lived in the Philippines along with the other early Spanish settlers, the modern community dates back to the end of the 19th century when a number of Alsatian Jews put down roots to be joined after the First World War by several Middle Eastern families. In the years following the Russian revolution some Russian Jews who had first settled in Harbin made their way on to the Philippines. Thus by the 1930s there were about 500 Jews. Jews fleeing Nazism pushed the number up to 2000. During the Japanese occupation there was no particular discrimination against the Jews: Jews from Allied nations were interned. The community which now numbers rather less than 200 people includes a number of leading businessmen and industrialists particularly in textiles. There have been no reports of anti-Semitism. Nonetheless it is a declining community like the others of the Far East and can be expected to disappear within the next two generations.

JAPAN

It was not until after 1853, when Commodore Perry of the United States navy arrived in Japan and initiated the process which was to open up Japan to outside influences, that Jews started to settle in the

country. During the next few decades Jewish communities established themselves in Yokohama and Nagasaki and subsequently Jews settled in Kobe and Tokyo. After the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917 some Jews took the long overland route eastwards and found sanctuary in Manchuria, China and Japan. During the 1930s and the early years of World War II, notwithstanding the close ties Japan enjoyed with Hitler's Germany, thousands of Jewish refugees from Nazism found temporary shelter in Japan before being re-located. Today there are some 5-600 Jews in Japan, including a small number of Japanese converts to Judaism. The backbone of the permanent Jewish community still consists of Russian émigrés, but the majority of the Jews now living in the country are temporarily-based foreign (mainly American) businessmen and their families.

However, notwithstanding the fact that Jews had no impact upon Japanese society until relatively recently and that even today there is no more than a tiny Jewish community in Japan, the Japanese are nonetheless fascinated by Jews: this fascination has given rise both to a form of philo-Semitism and to a form of anti-Semitism. One strand of the philo-Semitic tendency is the idea held by some Japanese that the Japanese themselves, or at any rate elements within the Japanese nation are descended from the lost tribes of Israel. A more chauvinistic view, known as the 'reverse theory of common origin' has it that Moses did not receive the Torah at Mount Sinai but travelled to Japan where he was instructed in the Shinto faith which he brought back in a modified form to the people of Israel. A further strand of this tendency has been the work of the Japanese Association of Jewish Studies which has encouraged an interest in Israel and the Jewish people. That such an interest now exists can be adduced from the fact that a book comparing the Jews with the Japanese, *The Japanese and the Jews* (Tokyo, 1970) by one Isaiah ben Dasan (an otherwise unknown writer whose identity is something of a mystery) won one of Japan's most coveted literary prizes and has sold well over a million copies.

But the general view of Jews is – especially recently – tinged by western anti-Semitism. Thus the Jews are perceived as an exclusively rich and successful people. Japanese dictionaries define the word Jew as 'people who covet money' or as a synonym for 'rich' or 'miser'. (See e.g. Sanseido's *New Crown English-Japanese Dictionary* (Revised edition, 1964)). One of the keys to understanding Japanese anti-Semitism is a curious incident from the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5. Soon after the outbreak of hostilities Japan reached the point where it could no longer sustain the financial burden of fighting such a powerful opponent. The vice-governor of the Bank of Japan was sent to London where by chance he met Jacob Schiff – an American Jewish financier. Schiff's hatred of the Tsarist régime was such that he was only too happy to help Japan win the war against Russia and accordingly raised a bond issue of \$200 million. With the Japanese victory Schiff became a national hero in Japan and was honoured by the Emperor Meiji. The idea that Jews have unlimited access to money was reinforced by the ubiquitous *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* which was translated into Japanese by Norihiro Yasue, a Japanese officer attached to the staff of the White Russian General Semenov during the Siberian Campaign (1918-22) whose boast it was that every soldier under his command had a copy of the *Protocols* in his knapsack. The book had a considerable effect. Indeed it became fashionable to attribute Japan's defeat in Siberia to an international Jewish conspiracy and this in turn led to a spate of anti-Semitic works being published in Japan during the 1920s and 1930s. Yasue went on to become one of the most prominent of the 'Jewish experts' in Japan and, interestingly, among the first to perceive what was considered as the potential usefulness of the Jews for the Japanese cause. Gradually the 'Jewish experts' formulated a policy which gained acceptance in high government circles and which came to be known as the Fugu Plan. According to this scheme Japan would offer the persecuted Jews of Europe a haven – 'an Israel in Asia' – in their newly acquired territories in Manchuria. Few Japanese were inclined to colonize these areas and it would thus serve the Japanese interest if Jews with the necessary skills could be persuaded to settle. In gratitude for Japan's uniquely humane treatment of the Jews, Jewish 'money power' would provide massive financial investment in Japan's Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere and enable Japan to properly develop her new dominions. At the same time 'Jewish newspaper, radio and film monopolies' would see to it that the world viewed Japan as a humane and civilized nation which should be accorded the respect of the international community. In 1938 the Japanese government decided that Japan's close links with the Axis powers would prevent this policy from being publicly endorsed but that it should be covertly pursued nonetheless. The basic premise of the plan – that Jewish power in the world could be manipulated in Japan's favour and that the persecution of the Jews could not serve that end – formed Japanese policy towards the Jews for the duration of the war. As a result many thousands of Jewish lives were saved. A distinct lack of enthusiasm towards the wider ramifications of the Fugu Plan on the part of American Jewish

leaders meant that it was never fully implemented. After the war many of the anti-Semitic 'Jewish experts' became, or pretended to become, very pro-Jewish. Among the population at large, interest in Jewish matters grew. Two fairly numerous Judaizing sects sprang up, the Makuya and Beit Shalom, which actively encouraged Japan to adopt a pro-Israel and pro-Jewish policy. But the essential element of the Japanese view of the Jews was still the one acquired perhaps from the *Protocols* – that the Jews are all-powerful and in various ways contrive to control the world.

Recently there has been a resurgence of anti-Semitic speculation in Japan. Indeed anti-Semitism probably has greater intellectual respectability in Japan than in any other advanced industrial country. In the Japanese Parliament Masaaki Nakayama and Aisaburo Saito are well known for their views which are little different from those of the 'Jewish experts' of the 1930s. Of even greater importance is the fact that recently there has been a spate of widely-read anti-Semitic books in Japan. The best known of these is a paperback entitled *If you Understand the Jews, You Understand the World: 1990 Scenario for the Final Economic War* which has sold almost a million copies and become a best-seller. The book's author, Masami Uno, argues that an international Jewish conspiracy has created Japan's present economic troubles. It is alleged that the sudden rise in the value of the yen (which has resulted in several of the smaller export companies becoming bankrupt) is part of a Jewish plot against Japan. Another book by Uno, *If you Understand Judea You Understand Japan*, presents the revisionist version of the Holocaust and claims that fewer Jews were killed by the Nazis than has been claimed: so far this book has sold almost 250,000 copies. There are, in addition, at least fifty other anti-Semitic works available in Japan with titles like *Miracles of the Torah which Controls the World*, *Understanding the Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, *Make Money with Stocks Targeted by the Jews*, *The Secret of Jewish Power to Control the World* and one by Deh Fujita (the Chairman of McDonalds, Japan), called *The Jewish Way of Blowing a Millionaire's Bugle*.

The Nobel laureate and Holocaust survivor, Elie Wiesel, has visited Japan to lecture on the dangers of hatred of minorities. The sort of anti-Semitism that makes the Jews scapegoats for a variety of economic and other ills has obvious antecedents in recent and not-so-recent European history. That it should have found so much of a following in Japan – a country which until recently had few if any Jews – is disturbing. This particular anti-Semitic manifestation can perhaps best be understood as a means of expressing xenophobic and particularly anti-Western attitudes which, since World War II, have been more or less frowned upon in Japan. (Some people in Japan believe that anti-Semitism is unlikely to take root there because many Japanese cannot tell the difference between one foreigner and another.) But it is a further and depressing proof of the success with which European Christian anti-Semitism takes root in diverse foreign soils.

5: AFRICA

EGYPT

The early connection of the Hebrews with Egypt is well known. During the 6th and 3rd centuries B.C. there was considerable Jewish emigration to Egypt from Palestine and large communities were established. The famous revolt of the Jews of Egypt was crushed in Alexandria in 115 A.D. and elsewhere within two years. The events surrounding the suppression of the revolt mark the destruction of the ancient Egyptian Jewish community. From the time of the Arab conquest however Jewish communities re-established themselves in Egypt so that by the 12th century there were 12-20,000 Jews in the country. As elsewhere in the Arab world discriminatory measures against non-Muslims made the life of the Jewish population wretched at least at certain periods. From the establishment of Ottoman rule over Egypt in 1517 the position of the Jews deteriorated and they became an oppressed and humiliated minority. Throughout the 19th century, with the advent of western influences, their position improved and the foundations of the modern community with its economic and industrial pre-eminence were firmly established.

At the time of the Israeli War of Independence there were 65-70,000 Jews in Egypt all of whom lived in Cairo, Alexandria and other urban communities. The economic situation of the Jews was good and there were many remarkably affluent members of the community. During the 1948 war hundreds of Jews were arrested; property and businesses were confiscated; there were bombings in Jewish areas which killed or maimed hundreds of them. As a result, between 1948 and 1950 about 25,000 Jews left Egypt many of whom made their way to Israel. In 1952 anti-British sentiments led to attacks on Jewish establishments

during which millions of pounds of damage was done to Jewish property. After the 1956 war 3000 Jews were interned, and thousands of others were given a few days to leave the country with their property being confiscated by the State. By 1957 there were only 8000 Jews left. After the 1967 war hundreds of Jews were arrested and tortured; Jews still in public employment were dismissed. Further emigration ensued so that by 1970 there were only 1000 Jews in Egypt.

In Egypt now there are about 250 Jews, the majority of whom are elderly. In 1984 a Jewish wedding in Cairo was the first to have been celebrated in Egypt in almost twenty years. It would be unreasonable to suppose that there will be many others.

Despite the normalization of relations between Egypt and Israel following the Peace Treaty of 1979, hostility to Israel is still frequently expressed and there are aspects of Israel's policies which infuriate many Egyptians. Much of this resentment is couched in terms of classic anti-Semitism and not infrequently the Egyptian media and government officials make vitriolic attacks on Jews: the blood libel has been mentioned and Jews have been described in terms of traditional anti-Semitic Jewish stereotypes. Israel's policies are often described as diabolical and comparisons between the Israelis and the Nazis are commonplace. The Jewish community of Egypt is however too small and insignificant to be the butt of any further persecution. Within a few years they will have completely disappeared and it would take a much more radical realignment of sympathies and policies than the Camp David Accords for them to be speedily re-established.*

TUNISIA

Traditionally the lot of the Jews of Tunisia was much the same as that of Jews elsewhere in the Muslim world. According to local Jewish belief Tunisia's Jews can claim descent from Jews who fled from the land of Israel after the destruction of the first Temple in 586 B.C. Although in the early years of Islam the Jews were tolerated and even respected, at least at certain periods, by the 19th century the majority of the Jewish population lived in squalor in one of the sprawling ghettos (*hara*) of the Tunisian cities. The conditions of the troglodyte Jews of southern Tunisia and those of the beautiful *haras* of Djerba were considerably better.

Tunisia was occupied by France in 1830 and a French protectorate was established in 1881. By and large the Jews were beneficiaries of the French presence. The so-called Fundamental Pact of 1857 gave equality under the law to non-Muslims and other liberal measures were introduced even before the Protectorate. The Jews enjoyed a period of unprecedented prosperity and stability. During World War II the brief German occupation of Tunisia led to forced labour camps being established for thousands of Jews.

Since Tunisian Independence in 1956 the country has followed the path of moderation in its dealings with the State of Israel. In 1965 President Bourguiba openly criticized Arab League Policy on the Palestinian question and advocated a policy of direct negotiation with Israel. This led to a break in diplomatic relations with Egypt. Soon thereafter Tunisia failed to follow the lead of the other Arab States in ending relations with West Germany after the exchange of Ambassadors between Jerusalem and Bonn. Subsequently, Bourguiba's proposal that Israel should be recognized in exchange for a return of territory was rejected by other Arab States. In 1973 Bourguiba put forward another diplomatic initiative, emphasizing the need for dialogue on the Arab-Israeli issue and the need for self-determination for Palestinians and Israelis alike. In the Yom Kippur War Bourguiba sent a small contingent to support the Arab cause. During these years the state of affairs for the Tunisian Jewish population was tolerable. After the Six Day War and the Yom Kippur War a few Jewish shops were burned in Tunis while the monumental Star of David on the front of the great synagogue in Tunis was destroyed. However, the authorities did their best to keep the peace and numerous arrests were made.

Despite the apparent concern of the authorities to allay the fears of the Jewish community, occasional attacks on Jews and Jewish property have nonetheless occurred. In 1979 a Djerban synagogue was burnt down, and in 1983 a synagogue in Zaris, close to the Libyan border. In 1985, shortly after the Israeli air force raid on the PLO headquarters in Tunis two Jewish children and a man were killed and 13 people were injured outside a synagogue in Djerba when a police guard ran amok. In the capital, Tunis, a Jewish shop was burned down and a rumour, picked up by the press, accused local Jews of complicity in the raid. Many foreign observers believe that these are isolated incidents. Tunisian Jews are not so sure.

* There are in addition believed to be a very small number of Jews remaining in Libya.

Israel's wars and foreign policy have had a direct influence on the size of Tunisia's Jewish population. In 1948 there were 105,000 Jews in the country; after the 1956 war the community soon dwindled to 70,000; after the 1967 war to 1200. Following the Israeli attack of 1985 hundreds of Jews made for the airport although many of them subsequently returned. Now there are about 3000 Jews in the country. Tunisian Jews say that the last exodus will take place the day after Bourguiba's death: he is widely respected among the Jewish community and viewed as its protector.

Notwithstanding the liberal policies of Bourguiba, the Tunisian Jews have always felt vulnerable: there are strong elements in Tunisia that have supported the more extreme Arab régimes. In the early years after independence such elements fought a guerrilla war against Bourguiba in an attempt to force a closer alignment with Egypt and Syria. In 1974 it was announced that Bourguiba and Qaddafi would create a union between Tunisia and Libya, which came to nothing, but left a burden of fear among Tunisia's Jews. The fear for what the future may hold is as strong as ever.

ALGERIA

When Islam came to Algeria the Judeo-Berber tribe of Jarawa put up an impressive resistance which included a number of notable victories. After the eventual triumph of Islam, the old Jewish communities were rebuilt by Jews from the Middle East who had followed the victorious armies. In the southern parts of Algeria nomadic Jewish tribes existed until the 12th century and their descendants were to be found in the south-eastern parts of the country until modern times. The Jews were not persecuted during the Islamic period as severely as elsewhere. During the 19th century, however, doctrinaire Christian anti-Semitism was introduced into parts of the Muslim world by European clerics and missionaries. At the same time the Jews received special and favoured treatment from the French colonists and despite the resentment of Muslims soon seized the new economic opportunities. After the Dreyfus Affair the leading French anti-Semite of the day, Edouard Drumont, was elected as the representative for Algiers. Although the anti-Semitic movement of the time spearheaded by Drumont was short-lived in Algeria, Nazi propaganda in the 1930s brought about its resurgence: this led to a massacre of the Jews of Constantine in 1934. Under the Vichy régime the Jews were treated with contempt by their French masters who applied the Vichy racial laws. Nonetheless the Jews survived.

At its peak in the early 1950s the Jewish community numbered 140,000. The erosion of the community has been brought about largely by the Algerian struggle for independence against the French. The Algerian Jews, almost universally gallicized, were viewed by the Muslims not only as Zionists and therefore enemies of Arab national aspirations but also as Europeans. The Jews were resented for their economic successes and for the privileges they had enjoyed at the hands of the French. In the early 1960s the murderous violence of the FLN and OAS often found the Jews caught in the middle. Jewish areas were attacked repeatedly – often they were physically situated between Muslim and European quarters. The Great Synagogue of Algiers was destroyed in 1960 and other synagogues and cemeteries were desecrated. Emigration on a large scale followed.

For the overwhelming majority of the 75,000 Jews who had left Algeria by 1962, France was the obvious asylum: only 5000 went to Israel. With Algerian independence the Jews were treated fairly enough under Ben Bella but with the rise of Boumédiène in 1965 their plight once again became acute. An anti-Jewish economic boycott was established; a Jew was executed for 'economic crimes'; individual Jews were charged with being Zionists; Jewish property was defaced and destroyed; almost all the synagogues were converted to mosques. The 1967 war provided the occasion for further looting, attacks and desecration. By 1969 there were only 1000 Jews left in Algeria and today there are thought to be about 400, most of whom are elderly.

MOROCCO

There have been Jews in Morocco since at least the 2nd century B. C. and local Jewish traditions maintain that the Hebrews had come to the country some centuries before that. In the early centuries of the present era the Jews were a powerful missionary force in the area: autonomous Judaized Berber tribes existed until the 12th century A.D. When Idris I took control of Morocco in 788 and extended the sway of Islam as far as the Atlantic the Jews and Judaized Berbers to a large degree resisted conversion. Under the Almoravides symbiosis between Muslim and Jewish cultures proved possible and the community experienced a remarkable intellectual and spiritual flourishing. Nonetheless, the Jews were still treated as second-class citizens as Islamic custom required.

Under the Almohads, however, the very existence of non-Muslims in Morocco was objectionable and many Jews converted to Islam at the point of a sword. In the 13th century Jews were again officially tolerated: but the edict permitting Jews to live in Morocco invoked the wrath of the Muslim populace and in 1232, in addition to various local excesses, the entire Jewish community of Marrakesh was slaughtered. In the latter part of the 13th century under the Merinids the future of the community improved a little but the rise of the mystical Marabout movement in the 14th century occasioned a further deterioration in the Jews' general condition, and the first of the Moroccan ghettos (*mellah*) was instituted. Many of the Jews living in Morocco today still inhabit their traditional mellah.

Many of the Jews expelled from Spain and Portugal in 1492 and 1496 settled in Morocco where until the present century they maintained a separate existence from their Moroccan co-religionists. Although the majority of Jews were characteristically poor, many were rich: Jewish merchants held a virtual monopoly of maritime trade until World War II and Jews were active in gold, silver, a variety of crafts, moneylending and the manufacture of wire. Other Jews were important in diplomatic spheres and as intermediaries of various sorts between Morocco and the outside world. The 19th century saw a gradual deterioration of the position of Jews: ghettoization continued apace; however, European penetration into Morocco and the interest of the European powers and of European Jewry in the plight of the Moroccan Jews led to Jews being granted, at least in theory, equal rights.

With the establishment of the French Protectorate in 1912 the Jews entered an era in which for the first time they began to enjoy a real equality with their fellow citizens. By the beginning of World War II the Jewish population of Morocco, swollen somewhat by refugees from Europe, numbered 225,000. Under the Vichy régime Jews were discriminated against but King Mohammed V did much to ensure that they were not deported. By 1948 there were some 270,000 Jews in the whole of Morocco but thereafter the population decreased rapidly. In 1951 there were 220,000; in 1960 160,000; in 1962 130,000; in 1946 85,000; but by 1968 42,000 and today around 17-18,000.

After the declaration of independence of the State of Israel there were numerous attacks upon Jewish premises and individuals: in June 1943 43 Jews were murdered and pogroms and other forms of attack persisted until Moroccan independence in 1956. The attacks clearly had a great deal to do with the rate of emigration. After independence Jews were treated better in some respects than they had ever been. They were granted full suffrage and complete freedom of movement: Jews were admitted as judges and as government officials. Leon Venzaguen, a Jew, was made Minister of Posts and Telecommunications. On the other hand, new laws were introduced making emigration illegal: nonetheless thousands of Jews carried on leaving for Israel clandestinely. After the 1967 war in the Middle East, not least because of an anti-Semitic campaign launched by the Istiqlal party, there was a worsening of conditions which led many middle class Moroccan Jews to emigrate. A call by King Hassan II in 1976 inviting Moroccan Jews who had emigrated to return was not taken up by more than a few score, although hundreds of Moroccan Jews have returned to visit family, friends and sacred sites.

Today the Jewish population of Morocco is stable and more or less confident. Morocco is the only Arab country where Jews enjoy equal rights and privileges with the rest of the population. Despite this, when in 1986 a Jewish MP stood for the position of First Vice-President of the Chamber, the ensuing furore was such that business in the Chamber was blocked for a week. The community is divided among the major cities: the majority live in Casablanca where around 2000 of them are on the breadline; the rest live in the historic Jewish centres of Marrakesh, Meknes, Fez and Tangier. Despite the rights the Jews enjoy, and their unfettered freedom of movement, a trickle of emigration continues. The community is aware that notwithstanding the tolerance of the present régime, and particularly of King Hassan II, their situation is potentially precarious. On the one hand they fear Muslim 'extremists' and on the other are aware that a war in the Middle East involving Israel could have fateful consequences for them despite the protection of the monarchy.

ETHIOPIA

Years of fierce oppression of the Falashas, the Black Jews of Ethiopia, led to mass emigration to Sudan between 1980 and 1984 and a series of Israeli airlifts of the population.* Little reliable is known of the state of the remaining Falashas: according to reports from Ethiopia the persecution is not as severe as it was. Nonetheless there is still a great desire on the part of the community to move to Israel partly for religious reasons and partly to be re-united with family members who

* See MRG Report No. 67, *The Falashas: The Jews of Ethiopia*.

have already left. Although numbers of Falashas are apparently being allowed to leave officially and legally, others are still trying to cross the border into Sudan by foot. Recently 37 Ethiopian Jews were arrested for suspected involvement in smuggling Jews out of the country. In Sudan a few hundred Falashas who have made the dangerous trek from their home villages are kept in refugee camps: the Sudanese authorities now refuse to allow the Falashas to leave for Israel and although the Falasha communities in the camps are well looked after, indeed as a politically sensitive minority they are better looked after than most other refugees, their chances of getting to Israel are slim. Few will want none the less to return to Ethiopia: perhaps they are not allowed to.

It was thought after the completion of 'Operation Moses' that there were no more than 7-8000 Falashas left in Ethiopia. A recent government census in Ethiopia however noted some 26,000 registered as Jews. It is not clear how many of these are descendants of Falashas who converted to Christianity in the 19th century (of whom there were many) or members of the Qemant, another Judaizing Ethiopian group. In view of the difficulties Israel has experienced in absorbing the Falashas into Israeli society some people doubt how far the Jewish State's interest will extend to the fringe elements of what from a Jewish point of view is already a fringe group.

THE REST OF BLACK AFRICA

Small Jewish communities established themselves in the 20th century in a number of European African colonies, notably in Kenya and Rhodesia. For the most part Jewish communities tended to disintegrate with the coming of independence. Insofar as it is possible to generalize, the popular attitude of African peoples towards Jews (to the extent that there was one) was sympathetic. The post-1974 identification of Israel with western and particularly American 'imperialist' interests, the continued Israeli occupation of Arab territory, and the commercial and other links between Israel and South Africa have given rise to a less sympathetic attitude towards Israel and also towards Jews, although a few black African governments have recognized Israel and accept Israeli aid.

SOUTH AFRICA

Jews were living in the Cape from the earliest years of white settlement but it was only after 1809 when religious tolerance was established as a principle of the Batavian Republic that Jews could profess and openly practise their religion. The early community, which consisted of British and German Jews, by the 1860s numbered several hundred, many of whom made significant contributions to the economic growth of the area. Jews were particularly prominent in the development of gold and diamond mining.

Between 1882 and 1912, 40,000 Jews went to South Africa from Russia; they were joined over the next few decades by 30,000 Jews fleeing from Germany, Lithuania and Latvia. Today the South African Jewish community is per capita among the richest in the world – many of its members are prominent in industry and even more so in the arts; a remarkably active and well-organized body, it numbers some 110,000.

Anti-semitism in South Africa was of negligible importance until the 1930s when Nazi racist ideology started making inroads into the white and particularly Afrikaner population. A fascist organization known as the Greyshirts disseminated a virulently anti-semitic ideology: they attempted to prevent further Jewish immigration from Europe and argued that Jews maintained a stranglehold on the South African economy. At the same time, the Purified National Party, which was the chief opposition group, had a distinctly anti-Semitic colouring. With the defeat of Germany and the revelations of the horrors of the holocaust, the Greyshirt movement petered out and little open anti-Semitism was in evidence for some years. However the ultra-right wing anti-reformist Herstigte Nasionale Party founded in 1969 to oppose any deviation from strict apartheid has, particularly through its

journal, *Die Afrikaner*, demonstrated a great deal of anti-Semitism. Anti-communist, it identifies Jews as the founders and chief supporters of communism; it frequently carries articles based on the work of Revisionist historians such as Faurisson denying that the holocaust in fact took place. In 1981 Eugene Terre Blanche, the leader of another ultra-right wing group, the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging, threatened to deprive Jews of political rights. Since then the AWB, with its swastika-like flag, has grown in strength. Anti-Semitic rhetoric is frequently used: 'Jewish capitalists' are held responsible for enticing blacks into white-designated cities and areas and for putting their profits before apartheid principles. Parliamentary democracy, which the AWB opposes, has been described by its spokesmen as a 'British Jewish system'. The Conservative Party has maintained that should they form a government Jews would not be eligible for office unless they were prepared to promote Christianity publicly. Anti-Semitism is not, however, restricted to the white right wing groups. Muslim communities in South Africa frequently express anti-Zionist arguments couched in the phraseology of traditional anti-Semitism. Some non-Muslim blacks have similar views: thus the United Democratic Front, a mainly black anti-apartheid and anti-government grouping, demands from Jewish groups a formal denunciation of Zionism as a prerequisite for any sort of co-operation. The Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO) has voiced clearly anti-Semitic statements from time to time.

Israeli foreign policy, particularly its relatively close ties with the South African government and its invasion of Lebanon, has had the effect of fuelling anti-Jewish hostility among radical blacks and whites in South Africa. Thus during the Lebanon war synagogues were daubed with anti-Semitic slogans and anti-Jewish speeches were made at rallies at South African universities and elsewhere. It remains to be seen whether Israel's apparent withdrawal of support for Pretoria recently has the effect of inclining black radicals towards the local Jewish community. Some South African Jews fear that if Israel decides to impose effective sanctions on South Africa, white resentment would fuel even more serious outbreaks of anti-Semitism.

CONCLUSION

Jews have lived in the Muslim countries of the Near and Middle East and North Africa for millenia. Before 1948 and the establishment of the State of Israel more than one million Jews lived in these areas; today only about 5% of this population remain there in their traditional homelands. The Jewish refugees from these areas, most of whom left because of anti-Jewish pressures of different sorts, have for the most part settled in Israel. As this brief description of disparate Jewish communities shows, anti-Jewish prejudice, of varying kinds and degrees, is still a force to be reckoned with in Muslim and other parts of Asia and Africa. Over the last hundred and fifty years, European Christian anti-Semitism has spread to many countries, chiefly to areas of the Islamic world where traditional social and religious attitudes towards Jews provided fertile soil for the new growth, but also to countries for instance in the East where Jews were virtually unknown.

Although by no means all anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism, some clearly is and it can act as an effective conductor of, or breeding ground for, anti-Semitic prejudice. The spread of traditional Christian and Muslim anti-Semitism and the rise of anti-Zionism have placed many of the communities discussed here in jeopardy: certainly Jews in most Muslim countries face an uncertain future. It is a matter of continuing concern that anti-Semitism has continued to spread even to territories where Jews have never lived, and that such a potent contemporary force as anti-Zionism has played a hand in this development.

Appendix: COMBATING ANTI-SEMITISM

(A shortened version of a contribution by Milton Ellerin to a Symposium in *Patterns of Prejudice*, the quarterly of the Institute of Jewish Affairs in London).

One formulates a response to the question 'How to combat anti-Semitism?' with a certain amount of trepidation. In truth, we strive for universal, enduring and immutable techniques as eagerly as we wait the coming of the Messiah.

It may be trite to point out that as the nature of anti-Semitism changes, from era to era, from locale to locale, from provocation to provocation, from national ambience to national ambience, so do coping strategies and tactics. Complicating the task is the reality that the very nature of anti-Semitism is constantly evolving. No serious student of the millenia-old phenomenon will dispute the fact that it is drastically different today from the anti-Semitism we endured during the Middle Ages, or that circumstances have changed dramatically from Hitler's Reich to today's Federal Republic of West Germany.

One must distinguish between attitudinal and behavioural anti-Semitism, although both may have well-springs in religion, economics, or a variety of other areas. The former may be merely one of emotions or beliefs, hopefully to be altered by education and understanding. The latter can and does run the gamut from hostile public expression of hatred towards Jews to the inflicting of bodily harm. In the post-World War II era, periodic poll data have revealed significant progress in changing lingering negative images of Jews, in the main attributable to a massive educational effort in various disciplines. In the primitive days of containing anti-Semitism by preventing defamation, the prescribed *modus operandi* was to concentrate on rebutting harmful stereotypes. Today's effort eschews point by point refutation for the projection of positive images. We take the initiative rather than react. Combating behavioural anti-Semitism frequently lies within the realm of legislation and the educational effort to persuade that such conduct is an offence against decency. There can be no disputing the fact that the cumulative effect of continuing educational efforts, utilizing every technique and device for effective communication on the part of the Jewish community and significant members of concerned Christians, has created a climate whereby public manifestations of anti-Semitic conduct are universally condemned and censured.

It seems axiomatic that to combat anti-Semitism adequately, one should have some clear understanding of what it is and what it is not. Are actions which are against Jewish interests *ipso facto* anti-Semitism? Is the black demand for quotas in employment anti-Semitism? Is the current outpouring of anti-Zionist, or anti-Israel material, anti-Semitism *per se* – a harbinger of an impending era of anti-Semitic feeling or hostile acts against Jews?

While there are many who will say no, large segments of the Jewish community will answer vehemently in the affirmative to these questions. The prevailing wisdom in the Jewish community is that while threats to Jewish interests are not at all on a par with the

virulent strains of anti-Semitism commonplace generations ago, they must nevertheless be countered. In the same way they feel that anti-Zionism must be countered with care and perception. Some emanates from sources sympathetic to the Arab cause to whom deliberate anti-Semitism is anathema, some from those who are indifferent to its potentially harmful impact on Jews, and some from hard core anti-Semites who, aware that today naked anti-Semitism is beyond the pale of respectability, wrap it in the mantle of anti-Zionism or anti-Israel activity. Anti-Zionist or anti-Israel sentiment must be analysed as to source and motive. That which emanates from sincere or uninformed sources must be neutralized by reason, logic and accurate information. To label all anti-Zionist, anti-Israel action as anti-Semitic is to destroy our credibility. Every major anti-Semitic incident must be carefully analysed, assessed and the findings crafted into an appropriate response.

Understanding the root causes of the problem can point the way to customary solutions. Bringing together teenagers of different cultures, promoting understanding of each other's values and problems, and involving educators in the development of exciting, remedial curricula can bring about a significant decline in teenage acts hostile to Jews.

The enactment of specific legislation has been and remains an accepted technique in combating anti-Semitism. In addition to prescribed punishment as a deterrent, such legislation defines that conduct which is intolerable to people of goodwill. Thus, civil rights legislation serves a dual purpose: punishment for the offender and public education by broadcasting the message that such practices were intolerable.

On the well-founded assumption that the universalist approach also benefits our particularist concerns, Jewish organizations (the metamorphosis from 'Defence Agencies' to inter-group relations practitioners bespeaks volumes on changing strategies) work with dedication and zeal to preserve and improve the quality of public education. Quite apart from its intrinsic value, poll data reflect that the better educated one is, the less likely one is to be bigoted. Time tested too is the premise that Jews fare best in a strong democratic society. As a colleague once cogently observed, 'what's good for democracy is better for Jews'. To that end, Jewish organizations have fought vigorously for full civil rights for all. The universalist approach has led Jews into coalitions with various ethnic groups.

Since Christian religious teaching has through the ages been the incubator of the most virulent strains of anti-Semitism, a continuous endeavour has been to create mutual understanding between Christians and Jews, which runs the gamut from motivating Christian leaders to denounce and reject publicly the Christ-killer myth to the arduous task of changing erroneous religious textbook teachings about Jews. Institutes on Judaism for Christian religious leaders, interreligious dialogues and conferences are commonplace.

In capsule form, then, the prescription for combating anti-Semitism has been the evolution of a strategy that categorizes it as a norm of conduct beyond toleration in civilized society. All else are tactics which are constantly changing and refined as time and circumstance dictate.

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