3 HOSTILE STEREOTYPES OF JEWS AND THEIR HISTORICAL ROOTS

Such a desperate / through and through evil / poisonous / devilish thing are these Jews / being our plague / pestilence / and all misfortune for 1400 years / and continuing to this day. Summa we have veritable devils in them / no other means to say it / They have no human heart toward us heathen / Such things they learn from their rabbis in the devilish nests of their schools. [Luther 1543/1577, 371f.]

I call this foreign element a plague and a bane unto itself. It can be called much more, for the Jews are a corrupted and degenerate people. [Arndt 1814, 193]

On the Genesis of Resentment toward Jews:
Why the Jews?

To understand how deep the roots of the cognitive stereotypes and emotional resentments of Jews go, one must delve into history. The historical and contemporary patterns of hostility toward Jews resemble each other strikingly, both in semantics and in form. Yet many people do not know, or are not aware, that some of the current negative formulations applied to Jews and/or Israelis belong to the standard repertory used for centuries by antisemites. Accordingly, many lack a critical awareness of how inflammatory some expressions can be. The current forms in which verbal antisemitism appears can be accurately described and fully explained only if one becomes aware of the underlying traditional conceptualizations and linguistic patterns. To demonstrate the unbroken continuity in Judeophobic thinking, we will therefore offer a brief sketch and historical background of the relevant stereotypes, some of which have existed for centuries and remain encoded in language and visual images to this day.¹
Hostility toward and hatred of Jews have manifested themselves for two millennia both verbally and nonverbally, taking forms that include discrimination, intimidation, persecution, humiliation, and murder. This complex phenomenon involves religious, historical, economic, political, psychological, communicative, and philosophic aspects (cf. Bauer 1985, 1992; Reinharz 1987; Wistrich 1991, 2010; Bergmann 2006; Laqueur 2006; Nonn 2008). All types and variants of hostility toward Jews grow out of specific, timeless conceptual patterns representative of non-Jews’ mental constructs about Jews. If in the course of history the particular manifestations and expressions of Judeophobia kept changing, what persisted was a conceptually and emotionally deep-seated resentment, independent of all current political, economic, social, and/or ideological motives, epiphenomena, and influences (cf. Grammel 2002, 9).

But why Jews? Why of all the communities and groups in the world have the Jews incurred so much hatred and violence over the centuries? Why was every misfortune, every plague, every atrocity ascribed to them (see Prager and Telushkin 2003)? Why did this hostility ultimately result in the Nazis’ radical policy of extermination? And why does modern antisemitism survive to this day, also in educated circles, despite the experience of Auschwitz and all the efforts to get at the roots of the phenomenon?2 These questions, often and intensely discussed—and always answered by enemies of the Jews in terms of the character and actions of Jews themselves—can be resolved only if one recognizes that hostility toward Jews is not simply one prejudice among many but something unique. It is unique because it has its origins in a moral and conceptual interpretation of the world that exists in no other form of hostility toward a group. Hatred of Jews does not mean hatred of a specified Other, of something clearly foreign, but of an alleged evil in the world. The genesis of an interpretation of the world that specifically targets the existence of the Jews lies in the split between Judaism and Christianity.

The oldest stereotype about Jews arose in antiquity.3 In pre-Christian times, Greek and Roman anti-Judaism rested primarily on the idea of Jews as “aliens” (Horkheimer 1946/2002, 30; Grunberger 1962, 265; Grunberger and Dessuant 2000, 264; Wistrich 2010, 81). This conceptualization, expressive not only of general xenophobic tendencies but also of specific ideas about Jews, turns up in Greek writings (see Heinemann 1931; Herr 1988) and functions through the centuries as a basic stereotype that promoted differentiation and segregation of Jews and remained a constant.4 The concept of the OTHER and the ALIEN
did not, however, develop into a genuinely Judeophobic conceptualization (Jews as rejectors of the true faith, Jews as the murderers of Christ, Jews as the epitome of evil) until after the split between Judaism and Christianity had occurred, when it went hand in hand with religiously motivated hatred. Here we have the origin of the hatred of Jews that has persisted for two thousand years. The early Christians, a Jewish group who initially differed from the rest of Jews only in their belief in Jesus as the Messiah, increasingly set themselves apart from Judaism, emphasizing their differences. It was Paul, not Jesus and his disciples, who created the split, asserting that only someone who believed in Jesus as the Savior represented the true faith. Only this belief, he claimed, not observance of the traditions, determined what was true Judaism. Anyone who did not accept this faith would suffer damnation. Paul’s theological writings became the basis for the strict separation between Jews, seen as apostates, and Christians, the only true believers. This dichotomy found its most drastic expression in the Gospel According to John, where the Jews are demonized and damned as unbelievers. Furthermore, the version that contends that Jesus was killed by Jews and in conformity with Jewish law, which was historically implausible in view of the existing political situation in Israel under Roman occupation and absolute rule (see Cohen 1977), led to the establishment of the stereotype of Jews as the murderers of God (see also, e.g., Parkes 1981; Simon 1996; Laqueur 2006; Wistrich 2010). Thus the foundation was laid for the distinction between the true and the false (demonic) Israel.

The radical split from the original religion and the rejection of Judaism were based among other things on disappointment at the lack of insight on the part of those Jews who did not recognize that Jesus, the Jew who came from their midst, was the Messiah, the Savior. This disappointment gave rise to the grudge that laid the foundation for the early resentment of Jews. By making their belief absolute, the Christians excluded any possibility that they might be fallible: accepting the Jews and their religion would have meant granting the cognitive possibility, at least hypothetically, that doubt might attach to their own faith, for the chief justification of the existence of Jewish life included the consideration that under some circumstances Jesus might not be viewed as the son of God. Such a doubt had to be prevented at all costs. Accordingly the Jews came to be identified as the complete opposite of the Christians’ existence, the absolute Other, as evil, and thus beyond the pale of all positive values.
The genesis and spread of Christianity as a comprehensive world religion goes hand in hand with the development of hostility toward Jews, their stigmatization and exclusion. Thus arose and became established the image of the Jewish person who remains obstinate, opposing the majority community of faith, closing him- or herself off, insisting on his or her own form of existence and belief. All further forms of anti-Judaism (including those having nothing to do with religion) ultimately hark back to this conceptualization, which divides the world into ‘right’ and ‘wrong.’ The long history of hostility toward Jews cannot, of course, be explained monicausally, since this hostility has changed repeatedly over the course of two thousand years, adjusting to current dispositions and situations (see, e.g., Parkes 1963; Poliakov 1985; Almog 1988; Laqueur 2006). But the genesis of Judeophobia goes back to the separation of Judaism from Christianity. Genuine hatred of Jews begins with the assertion by Christians, especially theologians, that they represent the one true faith, and it accompanies the institutional expansion of Christianity as a world religion (cf. Parkes 1981).

The specific features of Christian hatred of Jews grew out of the competition between Judaism and Christianity, as the latter struggled over centuries to establish itself as the leading world religion. According to Christian doctrine, Judaism had to cease to exist once the Messiah appeared (cf. Bauer 1992, 83).

To establish itself as the one true and indubitable religion, Christianity had to completely negate the religion from which it sprang. This negation produced a radical counterversion and resulted in damnation of Judaism as a religion, as well as of the people who remained loyal to it. This negation also laid the groundwork for all further nonreligious variants of hostility toward Jews. Research on hatred (see Haubl 2007) shows accordingly that particularly profound feelings of defensiveness arise and persist when an affinity exists between the object of hatred and the hatred-filled subject; precisely this affinity characterizes the relationship between the Jewish and Christian religions.

Why the Jews? Because Jesus, who promulgated the first Christian doctrines, was a Jew, bound up inseparably with Judaism, with its belief in God and with its laws, and laid out a new path to human existence and to God on the basis of the Jewish religion, and because those who came after him and developed Christianity into a world religion either could not or would not practice the tolerance he preached or embrace his message of love and mercy, but instead fell into rage and hatred toward their own roots, which they wanted
to extirpate with blazing intolerance or refused to accept.9 Jesus the Jew becomes Christ the Savior, who is murdered by the Jews, released from his Jewish roots, transformed into a being separate from Judaism; the former brothers in the faith become anti-Christ who reject the true faith; Judaism becomes a source of damnation. The coexistence of two religions with a common foundation cannot be tolerated: the existence of Jews becomes apostasy. From this apostasy springs the total devaluation of everything Jewish. Jews become the archetype of all that is evil and reprehensible in the world. In the course of the centuries, a theological interpretation becomes an all-encompassing ethos; a religious interpretation and doctrine becomes a system for determining the meaning of the world, a system in which Jews and Judaism on principle come to figure as the negative dimension.

If one considers that the institution of the Christian Church, with its doctrines and New Testament, exercised primary influence on all spheres of life, all social, cultural, and political structures and processes for more than eighteen hundred years as the most powerful societal and ideological force, that it dominated all literary and artistic forms, that it accompanied or shaped all hegemonic structures (and to this day remains a factor in broad sectors of society), it is not surprising that the image it created of the Jew as enemy should have survived through the centuries despite all historical changes. Hostility toward Jews belongs to a mentality with deep roots in Western culture, passed down from generation to generation as a fixed component of Christian tradition and identity.

(1) The Jew pondereth night and day / how to harm the cristian in any way [Title of an anonymous pamphlet from the fifteenth century, quoted by Hortitz 1999, 37]

Jews are accordingly not an enemy, they are the enemy. In addition to being a metaphysical evil, on earth they represent the epitome of evil, the human embodiment of all that is bad, the anti-Christ, and are therefore often described as devil’s brood and Satan’s spawn (see Trachtenberg 1943).10

The schism in the Christian Church caused by Martin Luther does not bring about any reversal. On the contrary: in his writings, Luther, enraged at the Jews’ loyalty to their religion, hurls furious accusations at Jewish people, thus exacerbating their demonization,11 and thereby plays a major part in poisoning the relationship of Protestantism to Judaism for centuries to come:12
That is what I said heretofore that a Christian, excepting the devil, has no more poisonous / bitter enemy than a Jew. [Luther 1543/1577, 378]

But all matches the judgment of Christ that they are poisonous / bitter / vengeful / secretive vipers / murderers & devil’s spawn / who stab in secret and do harm / because they cannot do it openly. Therefore I would wish / they were there / where no Christians are. [Luther 1543/1577, 377]

The conceptualization of Jews as JESUS-MURDERERS, MURDERERS OF THE SAVIOR, as having blood on their hands and still opposing the true faith provided the basis for numerous further negative concepts, some of which derived from the economic and social conditions imposed upon the Jews, some of which were inventions reflective of a perspective oriented toward an image of the enemy (e.g., RITUAL MURDERS AND USE OF BLOOD BY JEWS; cf. Erb 1999; von Braun 1999).

Herefrom thou mayest wel see / . . . that they are bloodthirsty dogs and murtherers / to all of Christianity . . . How they have then been found guilty / of having poisoned water and fountaine / stolen children / and stabbed them through / and now dismembered them with flax combs / that they might secretly cool themselves with Christians’ blood. [Luther 1543/1577, 345]

The godless, blaspheming, thieving, robbing, and murthering [Jews] [Nigrinus 1570, 177]

In what unspeakable way the Jews have stolen Christian children, then martyred, flayed, and crucified them, and sucked out their blood with quills, thereof the most trustworthy exempla may be read . . . in the most believable writers. [Grattenauer 1803, 12f.]

This systematic devaluation of Jewish existence per se provided the basis for all subsequent collective attributes that developed during the following centuries (JEWS AS STUBBORN, VENGEFUL, DIABOLICAL, etc.) and extended far beyond religious differences and created the foundation for a strictly binary image of the world, which persists to this day in the minds of many people, as a current example, a 2009 e-mail to the Central Council, clearly shows (for a more thorough discussion, see chapter 4, under Current Stereotypes and Their Verbal Manifestations):
(7) you are proud of gaza?? what human being can be proud of murder?
an antichrist. jesus already said ‘you have the devil for a father.’ that’s in the
bible! you can recognize arihman children by their deeds. thanks israel
you’ve opened my eyes. you reap what you sow! you have three guesses
what israel will reap in the future. i’m looking forward to that day. that day
will go down in cosmic history as the day when evil was beaten. [ZJD_
Gaza2009_84/816_Dar_001]

According to this view of the world, Jews do not merely differ from non-Jews
in one way or another; they are fundamentally different and fundamentally
bad. This mental construct results in the creation of a categorical, collective
image of the enemy. The Judeophobic stereotype projections of Jews as
child-murderers, blood cultists, and so on have nothing to do
with actual circumstances but are constructs in the minds of non-Jews.14 As
a result, everything Jews do or do not do as Jews is by definition wrong, and
all judgments about Jews are a priori precondemnations, all resting on the
characterization of Jews as bad. According to this interpretation of the world,
all evils were and are attributed to the hated Jews: children’s disappearance
or murder, crooked deals, poisoned wells, illnesses, the plague, crop destruc-
tion, personal misfortunes, lost wars, financial crises. Thus Jews serve as the
universal scapegoats in predominantly Christian social structures.

In the case of some traditional stereotypes, real historical circumstances are
invoked, for instance when it comes to the Jew as homeless wanderer.
After the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 CE, many Jews went
into exile and formed communities in the diaspora. The rejection by the
inhabitants of the host countries, who did not want the Jews to become in-
tegrated, was transformed by way of projection into a negative characteristic
of the Jews. Since then the stereotype of the Jews as restless wanderers
has become commonplace; they are said to be unwilling to make themselves
at home, preferring to remain foreign among their hosts and therefore never
developing solidarity with them:

(8) The Jew may be counted among other dead nations; but to the
Germans . . . the Jew does not belong. [Sauerwein 1831, 10]

(9) I do not want [the Jews’ procreation] also for this reason, that they
are a thoroughly alien people and I wish to keep the Germanic tribe as free
as possible of alien admixtures. [Arndt 1814, 188]
Because non-Jews prohibited Jews from pursuing normal economic enterprises such as the skilled crafts, Jews were excluded from all social enterprises other than dealing in money (see Raphael 1999, 115). The reproach of being usurers and money-grubbers that non-Jews leveled against Jews thus derived from a situation that non-Jews had created themselves. In the course of history, pursuit of these activities came to be conceptualized as typically Jewish and was cited as a justification for defamatory and discriminatory treatment.

\[(10)\] But what be the Jews? in truth no confessors / but blasphemers and defilers of God and Christ . . . They be also lazy layabouts / for they be idle usurers / that have neither fields nor pastures / can do no trades / nor any handiwork / but go idle / letting us toil and in the sour sweat of our brows earn our victuals / they meanwhile nourish themselves all from the poor Christians’ sweat and blood /and live well from / pressing us through usury and cozenage. [Salzmann 1661, cited in Hortzitz 2005, 66f.]

The cliché of the Jewish haggler and usurer became a permanent fixture in the collective frame of reference and established itself by way of language in corresponding stock phrases (see chapter 4, under Current Stereotypes and Their Verbal Manifestations). In world literature the stereotype of the MERCILESS MONEY-GRUBBER has become known through the figure of Shylock in Shakespeare’s Merchant of Venice. The negative opinion of Jews turns up across the centuries in numerous texts and occurs in all sectors of society, by no means only among the rabble, the uneducated, but also among writers, thinkers, priests, scholars, and philosophers. In Goethe’s The Annual Fair in Plundertown the clichés are presented satirically by means of stock phrases representing the perspective of one who hates Jews. Nonetheless, they mirror the culturally established knowledge of the time:

\[(11)\] You know the people they call the Jews . . . they have a belief / that gives them the right to rob strangers . . . The Jew loves money and fears danger. He knows how, with little effort and without risking much / to wring money from the land through commerce and interest . . . Yet through money they find the key to all hearts, / And no secret is well kept from them . . . They know how to capture everyone through loans and exchanges; / He who lets himself be drawn in never gets free. [Goethe 1773/1973, 135f.]
Not even the Enlightenment, with its rational critique of religion, which cited rational principles in calling for equal rights for all and the elimination of distinctions according to rank and class, broke through the culturally established anti-Jewish thinking; Voltaire viewed Jews as the natural enemies not only of certain nations but of all humanity and thus succumbed to the traditional, religiously based, conceptualization:\textsuperscript{18}

(12) by virtue of their own laws, natural enemies of these nations and ultimately of humanity. [Voltaire 1761, quoted in Hentges 1999, 45]

In several articles in his \textit{Dictionnaire philosophique}, Voltaire also mentions the Jews very disparagingly, calling them, among other things, \textit{“the most despicable people of the earth”} (see Poliakov 1983, 101; see also Laqueur 2006, 88; \textit{“I would not be the least bit surprised if this people one day were to become deadly to the human race.”})

The assumption that enmity toward Jews can be attributed primarily to lack of enlightenment and education must thus be rejected: even highly intelligent and cultivated persons were and are not immune to Judeophobic resentments (see chapter 8). A glance at the writings of the great German philosophers of Idealism, who were dedicated to seeking the truth through reason, makes this particularly clear:

(13) Since their exile, the Palestinians living in our midst have gained the not undeserved reputation for fraud, also amongst the great majority, thanks to their spirit of usury. [Kant 1798/1839, 218]

(14) Do you then not recall the state within the state, my friends? Does not the understandable thought come to you that the Jews, who without you are citizens of a state that is more solid and mighty than all of yours, if you vouchsafe them also the right to citizenship in your states, will completely trample upon the rest of you citizens? . . . But to give them citizenship I truly see no other way than to cut off all their heads one night and put in their place others in which not one single Jewish idea can be found. To protect ourselves against them, I also see no other means than to conquer their promised land for them and to dispatch them all thither. [Fichte 1793/1845, 150]
Similar statements can be found in Herder and Hegel. Hegel, the most important philosopher of Idealism, manifests in his early writings a particularly virulent form of hatred toward Jews, expressed by means of almost all the traditional stereotypes yet integrated into his philosophical reflections on the World Spirit (see the thorough discussion in Hentges 1999):

(15) Not to be denied are the Jews’ twisted and immoral conceptions of the anger, partisanship, and hatred toward other peoples, yea, the intolerance of their Jehovah, conceptions that unfortunately made their way into the practice and theory of the Christian religion. . . . And we must be thankful not to their priests but to philosophy . . . and the milder light of our times for the fact that their grim quarrelsomeness, their intolerance, and their conceit have diminished. [Hegel 1793–1794]

According to Hegel, the Jewish people “is without a soul and felt no need for freedom when it was emancipated,” isolates itself from other human groups, and is remarkable for its scorn and hatred for other human beings. He sees Jews as addicted to self-isolation, alienated from love, spirit, and life, and he considers “the Sabbath characteristic of the slavish spirit.” He also articulates the reproach that Jews are lowly, intellectually inferior beings and deniers of the true religion:

(16) The spirit recognizes only the spirit; they saw in Jesus only the man, the Nazarene, the carpenter’s son . . . as much as he was, he could not be more, he was only one like them, and they themselves felt that they were nothing. His attempt to give them awareness of something divine had to fail with them, for the belief in something divine, in something great, cannot reside in filth. [Hegel 1800]

After more than seventeen hundred years of defamation, hostility toward Jews was so deeply rooted in Western thought that even poets and thinkers who shook off the old church doctrine and paved the way for self-determination could not free themselves of that hostility, despite their reflections on the universal rights of man. This shows very clearly that hostility toward Jews was based not only on ideology but also on human systems of belief, supported by seemingly unshakable ethical principles or categories of thought. That
these Manichaean thought categories had first found their way into the world through Christian church doctrine did not occur to these thinkers.

Until the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century hostility toward Jews was motivated primarily by religion and Christian anti-Judaism (see, e.g., Bauer 1992; Weinzierl 1995; Benz 2004). This anti-Judaism resulted concretely in exclusion, denial of citizenship, persecution, forced baptism, as well as sporadic pogroms, leading to the murder of Jews. The prevailing stereotypes that found expression in literature, in sermons, in the incitation of pogroms, and in anti-Jewish tracts characterized Jews as JESUS-MURDERERS, HOMELESS WANDERERS, MONEY-GRUBBERS, USURERS, HAGGLERS, and CONSPIRATORS (for thorough discussions, see the individual essays in Schoeps and Schlör 1999). No matter what Jews did or refrained from doing over the centuries, whether they had economic success and social prestige or not, from the resentment-skewed perspective they were always assessed negatively. Depending on the particular perspective, they might be labeled the enemy de jour—as capitalists, socialists, or Bolshevists (cf. Barkai 1999; Niedermüller 1999). In many texts they were portrayed as inferior creatures, often compared to animals and placed on a lower rung of being:

(17) And despite all this influence, might, wealth, and freedom they were and are the bloodsuckers of the people . . . remained on the lowest level of civilization and spread filth and crudeness all about. [Fries 1816, 5]

Here the principle of demonization that forms part of Judeophobia becomes apparent, an element that extends beyond Jews’ function as scapegoats: the hostility originally motivated by religion has become total hostility, directed as resentment not toward individual Jews but toward the Jews’ very existence. In National Socialism this resentment formed the bedrock of antisemitism as salvation (cf. Bauer 2001; Friedländer 2006), the extirpation of Judaism in the name of “the good of mankind,” in order to “preserve the German people from harm” (cf. Katz, 1980, 1990; see chapter 9, under Suggestions for Solving the “Jewish Problem”).
Survival and Resistance of Judeophobic Stereotypes in Modern Times

An examination of the history of hostility toward Jews reveals that the most prevalent stereotypes result from discriminatory behavior of non-Jews toward Jews or, far more commonly, represent constructs that have nothing to do with reality, that are pure products of the imagination (e.g., JEWS AS CHILD-MURDERERS, PLAGUE SPREADERS, OPINION MOLDERS, and WORLD CONSPIRATORS). Stereotypes transmitted over centuries through language, sometimes with conscious intent, sometimes unconsciously, came to form an encoding system or, as Volkov (1990, 29, 2006, 66) puts it, a “cultural and communicative code.” From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, hostility toward Jews through the centuries can be described as the survival of a stable mental belief system whose ideological components are equated to ethical and moral values and whose units of knowledge are communicated institutionally. This hostility has become a conceptual construct based primarily on emotional resentment, never questioned but simply taken as a given and assumed to be valid. It forms a cognitive network of stereotyped concepts inscribed in collective memory and thus situated on a supraindividual level as an element of general knowledge.

These stereotype constructs had solidified in the minds of many into a system for making sense of the world. This system then gave rise to radical suggestions, for instance in Hartwig von Hundt-Radowsky’s Judenspiegel [Jewish mirror] of 1819. To this hate-filled demagogue, Jews were “subhumans” and “vermin,” “malodorous hoopoes.” He categorically rejected any suggestion of conversion or assimilation; according to him, the Jews were terminally depraved and the males had to be eliminated, their women confined in brothels:

(18) The best thing, however, would be to purge the land of this vermin, and there are two means by which to do this. Either to annihilate them altogether or, as Pharaoh, the Meiningen, Würzbergers, and Frankfurters have done, to chase them from the land. [Hundt-Radowsky 1819, 144]

One can, of course, see such tracts as the psychopathological products of individuals, but the fact that after this text appeared the author was not taken away to a municipal insane asylum indicates the broad acceptance or at least indifference with which such violent fantasies were received.20
Complex Judeophobic interpretive patterns were generally established that included all human characteristics (appearance, character, intelligence, and social conduct). As far as physical appearance was concerned, Jews were considered strikingly ugly, with specific demonic facial features, such as hooked noses, and dark hair and eyes. Jews’ character was associated with such epithets as intellectual inferiority or destructiveness, hypocrisy, conspiratorial mendacity, slyness, and vengefulness. To Jewish women, according to this pattern, was ascribed noxious beauty, along with sexual attractiveness and lasciviousness. Additional characteristics were stinginess, selfishness, mercilessness, emotional coldness, and cowardice. Allegedly Jews also practiced ritual murder, engaged in a blood cult, and were obstinate and blind toward the true faith and the ethical values of decent societies. The Jews’ religious belief that they were the chosen people gave rise to the charge that they were arrogant:

(19) They constitute the most arrogant and exclusive aristocracy. [Naudh 1861, 7, quoted in Hortiz 1988, 161]

As social beings the Jews were alleged to harm society, functioning as parasites, spreaders of disease, exploiters, usurers, traitors, corrosive influences, and influential shapers of opinion:

(20) Judaism is to be compared . . . to a gigantic freeloading tumor. [Holst 1821, 64]

The Jews reputedly aimed to take over the world and enslave all non-Jews (see *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and Hitler’s concept of *World Jewry*):

(21) The Jews want . . . to rule the world. [Scharff-Scharffenstein 1871, 50]

According to this racist ideology, all these negative qualities belong to the entire people, and the expression *eternal Jew* stands for the cliché of the immutably evil nature of Jews, along with the collective conceptualization of the entire Jewish people as depraved:

(22) I call this alien element a very scourge and bane. It should be called that all the more in that the Jews are a depraved and degenerate people. [Arndt 1814, 193]
A closed society . . . which lives only from spying and lurking, cannot but become spiritually depraved. [Fries 1816, 16]

The religious dimension of hostility toward Jews was displaced or overlaid with a secular form: in the nineteenth century, religious anti-Judaism was joined by a racist antisemitism that emphasized Jews’ fundamental differentness as a race or people: the so-called Aryan ideal and the concept of human inequality moved into the foreground of the racial doctrine being promulgated as scientific and was used to justify the isolation and exclusion of Jews (cf., e.g., Gobineau 1853). Jews came to be described as an alien race, as foreign bodies, as parasites and corrosive elements within non-Jewish communities. Eugen Dühring (1881) and Houston Stewart Chamberlain (1899/1944) authored much-read and often reprinted texts that on the basis of racial laws allegedly derived from scientific principles divided the world’s peoples into higher- and lower-order races, with the Jews classified as an inferior and non-Aryan people. The supposed fact that Jews could achieve positions of power because of their wily and scheming nature was likewise a common cliché. Stereotypes of Jews as parasitic exploiters and influential power-grabbers found particularly frequent verbal expression:

They one and all shamelessly exploit peoples and governments. [Dühring 1881, 121]

In Berlin, capital of the Reich, the Jewish race plays a dominant role in the city administration. . . . I shall not even mention other Jewified cities. [Dühring 1881, 123]

Terms such as dejewification, half-breeds, and Jewish race character, all attributable to the semantic network of racist ideology, were used to highlight the dangers emanating from the “degenerate race” (Dühring 1881, 158). Dühring also took up the “Jewish problem” and discussed in all seriousness “solutions” such as “reduction measures,” “agitation,” and “legislation” against “Jewish hegemony” and the “proliferating power of Jews,” to serve as provisional “aids” and “means of disposal” (119 f.), and came to the conclusion that “Shaking off the Jewish nightmare is a cause that must be embraced by all nations” (154).

Similar passages can be found in the writings of Adolf Stoecker, the Berlin theologian and court chaplain, but also in political party platforms from the years 1884 to 1906 (see de Lagarde 1884; Friesel 2006). Thus Paul de Lagarde
emphasized in the Prussian Conservative Party’s program for 1884 “that the Jews form not a religious community but a nation” (88), noting that “no nation has ever . . . been as worthless in every respect as the Jewish one” (89) and that “the Jews as Jews are a dire misfortune in every European people” (91). These and others’ comments posit a categorical separation of Germans from Jews, found in the nineteenth century on all institutional levels. In most texts that mentioned the “Jewish question” or the “Jewish problem” in Germany, the same solutions were put forward repeatedly, formulated as demands addressed to the allegedly non-German Jews, such as that “the Jews cease to be Jews” (de Lagarde 1884, 95). In his work Jews and Indogermans, he furthermore asserted:

(26) One would have to have a heart as hard as a crocodile’s skin not to feel pity for the poor Germans, who are being sucked dry, and—which amounts to the same thing—not to hate the Jews, not to hate and despise those who—out of humane forbearance—speak on behalf of these Jews or are too cowardly to crush this vermin. There is no negotiating with trichina worms and bacilli. Nor should trichina worms and bacilli be educated; they must be destroyed as quickly and thoroughly as possible. [de Lagarde 1887, 339]

This passage shows that classifying Jews as pests through the use of animal metaphors did not originate with the Nazis. The 1905 Leipzig platform of the German Socialist Party contained similar language:

(27) The race-alien Jewish people has proved to be an element destructive to . . . our life as a nation. And thus we view the struggle against the power of Judaism as a moral, political, and economic necessity. [Salomon 1924, 155]

And in the 1892 Tivoli Platform of the large and influential German Conservative Party the following statement occurs:

(28) We combat the invasive and destructive Jewish influence on our life as a people. We demand Christian authorities for the Christian people and Christian teachers for Christian children. [Salomon 1924, 65]

These texts, whose semantics exhibit nothing but racism, extremism, and psychopathology, we read today, applying modern standards of judgment, with astonishment and revulsion, but readers of the time took for granted the ideas they expressed and considered them worthy of discussion. Traces of the
widely and deeply rooted hostility toward Jews could be found everywhere: in words and in images on postcards bearing hateful caricatures, in letters, novels, pamphlets, and prospectuses, in philosophical, theological, historical, economic, and political treatises, and on signs; Judeophobia thus constituted an integral part of communication on all levels of public life.

(29) The Jew does not work but lets others work; he speculates and makes deals with the products of others’ hands and intellectual work. The center of his activities is the stock exchange. . . . This alien tribe has installed itself surreptitiously in the midst of the German people in order to suck the very marrow from its bones. [Glagau 1878, 16f.]

Nor are the realms of art, music, and literature excluded: Richard Wagner’s essay “Judaism in Music,” with its sweeping generalizations, may be seen as symptomatic of antisemitic thinking in the nineteenth century (cf., e.g., Katz 1986). This text combines racist devaluation with envy of the success of Jewish artists:

(30) The Jew, congenitally incapable of speaking to us artistically, whether through his external appearance, his language, or least of all his song, has nonetheless managed to achieve dominance of public taste in the most widespread of the modern arts, in music. [Wagner 1850, 73]

Wagner viewed Judaism as inhuman and thus called for it to be jettisoned, a typical nineteenth-century demand directed at the Jews living in Germany:

(31) To become a human being in association with us means for the Jew . . . ceasing to be a Jew. [Wagner 1850, 83]

Images of Jews as speculators and usurers, as evil and ugly shysters, as heartless, cold merchants or corrupting, immoral intellectuals also turn up in two widely read nineteenth-century novels written by authors who were otherwise liberal in their thinking, Gustav Freytag (Soll und Haben [Debit and credit], 1855) and Wilhelm Raabe (Der Hungerpastor [The hunger pastor], 1864). These writers articulate in their novels, letters, and other writings traditional anti-Jewish stereotypes and feelings of distaste, although one would not be justified in characterizing them as filled with burning hatred of Jews. But it was part of the cultural communicative heritage to verbalize animosities toward Jews; as an element of the collective consciousness it was not unusual but,
on the contrary, to be expected and seldom given any thought. Dehumanizing descriptions and metaphors occurred in conjunction with traditional stereotypes:

(32) ...and in the public square ... the Jewish element wriggles through like a slimy eel. [Freytag 1855, 490]

Freytag describes the Jew Itzig Veitel in standard Judeophobic clichés:

(33) It was the face of a devil ... red hair standing up like bristles, the ugly features bespeaking hellish fear and malice. [Freytag 1855, 386]

Using personification, Freytag depicts the house of the Jew Ehrenthal as devoid of character and uses the simile of a gypsy woman to evoke the stereotype of the alien, the homeless wanderer. Furthermore, the tastelessness of the Jewish family is stressed:

(34) There was no good character in the house; it looked like an old gypsy woman. [Freytag 1855, 175]

(35) ... and the numerous hideous oil paintings on the walls ... [Freytag 1855, 175]

In Raabe’s Hungerpastor, the protagonist, Hans Unwirsch, and his antagonist, Moses Freudenstein, are constantly contrasted by means of polarizing descriptions. In (36) and (37) we have typical examples:

(36) It was touching to see the timid reverence with which Hans ... but in truly diabolical fashion Mose ... attempted to trip up this belief in authority. [Raabe 1864, 137]

(37) For the first time in his life, Hans Unwirsch felt what hatred was; from this moment on, he hated with all his heart the slippery, constantly changing creature that had once called itself Moses Freudenstein. [Raabe 1864, 295]

In both novels similar descriptions turn up, drawing on the same semantic fields to focus on the demonic (“face of a devil” and “diabolic”), the unpredictable and dehumanized (“like a slimy eel” and “slippery”), the non-German (thus both Freytag and Raabe imitate the Yiddish spoken by the Jewish characters and stress their foreign appearance), and the anti-Christian elements (Freudenstein’s conversion is invalidated as an opportunistic misstep).
Theodor Fontane, too, repeatedly revealed an attitude hostile toward Jews. In a letter written in 1882 from the holiday resort of Norderney he notes:

(38) The Jews were a disaster: their impudent, unattractive, knavish faces (for all their greatness resides in knavishness) crowd around one everywhere. Anyone who has cheated people in Rawicz or Meseritz for a year, or if not cheated outright at least pulled off shady deals, has no right to prance around on Norderney among princesses and countesses. [Quoted in Fleischer 1995, 84]

In his private correspondence Fontane expressed negative views of Jews several times, using generic comments such as “Borkum is Jew-free” (see endnote 28; cf. Fleischer 1995, 84; see also Benz 2001, 9, 58f.). A letter from 1898 contains explicitly racist formulations:

(39) Everywhere they are in the way (much more so than previously); they mess up everything, interfere with consideration of every question as such. Despite all its talents, it is a terrible people, not a “leavening” providing strength and freshness but a ferment in which the uglier forms of fermentation are active—a people to which from the very beginning something conceited and lowly has adhered, which the Aryan world cannot tolerate. What a difference between the Christian and Jewish criminal element. And all that ineradicable. [Quoted in Paulsen 1981, 310; see also Goldammer 1993, 54f.]

The term antisemitism was first employed in 1879 by the journalist Wilhelm Marr to distinguish a rejection of Jews understood to be scientifically motivated and secular from hostility based on religion (see also Berger Waldenegg and Christoph 2000; Bergmann 2006, 6ff.; Rensmann 2004, 71f.). In Marr’s text *The Victory of Judaism over Germanic Identity*, numerous conceptualizations find verbal expression that were dominant in the nineteenth century (JEWS AS INTELLECTUAL OPINION MOLDERS IN THE PRESS AND FINANCIAL POLICY, JEWS AS ALIENS AND FOREIGN ELEMENTS, JEWS AS DESTROYERS OF CHRISTIAN SOCIETIES) (see also Zimmermann 1986, 2005, 112f.). The following examples all come from this work.

According to Marr, Jews are characterized by “acting to harm Germanic identity, to break down the Germanic and destroy it.” He describes Jews as “aliens in our midst,” “Semitic aliens,” “this alien people,” an “alien tribe” (Marr
We also encounter the traditional stereotypes of the usurer, demagogue, revenge seeker, and the theory of a world conspiracy:

(40) Money-grubbers . . . without a fatherland [14]; commit usury . . . are natural haggler and usurers . . . shrink from regular work, . . . are highly gifted and talented [13]; hostile toward others . . . slippery . . . sly . . . resilient [14]; domineering, influential [23]; . . . Jewified daily press . . . vengeful [50]. [Marr 1879]

This text manifests a Judeophobia that does set itself apart from religiously motivated anti-Judaism and does not obviously draw on theological considerations or religious motifs, yet continues to cultivate the old resentments and the traditional dichotomization. In this work Marr reveals himself rhetorically and argumentatively to be a forerunner of those who express hostility toward Jews today in that he insists on the facticity of his defamatory statements and presents them as indubitable truths. Marr contends that he has “no evil intentions” but relies rather “on facts,” “irrefutable and historical facts” (1879, 33, 55).

An article by the historian Heinrich von Treitschke launched the so-called Berlin antisemitism debate among academics in 1879 (see Boehlich 1965; Volkov 2006, 22ff.). The respected historian had spoken out against what he feared would be a mass immigration of East European Jews, and he charged the German Jews with inadequate willingness to assimilate:

(41) What we have to demand of our Jewish fellow citizens is simple: they should become Germans, see themselves simply and properly as Germans—without prejudice to their belief and their old sacred memories, which we all recognize as worthy of respect; for we do not want the millennia of Germanic customs to be followed by an era of German–Jewish hybrid culture. . . . But it remains equally undeniable that numerous and powerful circles among our Jewish population by no means harbor the good will simply to become Germans. [Treitschke 1879, 573, quoted in Boehlich 1965, 10]

Among members of the educated middle classes, racist concepts also joined forces with intolerance and a sense of Christian superiority:

(42) . . . and thus the lukewarm agitation of the moment seems merely a brutal and hateful but natural reaction of the Germanic sensibility against
a foreign element that has come to occupy far too much space in our lives. . . . But the contrast can be mitigated if the Jews, who talk so much about tolerance, really become tolerant and show some reverence toward the beliefs, customs, and feelings of the German people, who long ago did penance for the old wrong and have given them the rights of man and the citizen. [Treitschke 1879, 575f., quoted in Boehlich 1965, 11f.]

In this work Treitschke produced the sentence that in the Nazi period was instrumentalized as the permanent headline in the Stürmer: “The Jews are our misfortune!”31 This sentence, in which Treitschke expressed his conviction that the Jews were having a destructive influence on the cultural and economic life of the German state, mirrors the essential constants of hostility toward Jews: the unreal, hyperbolic, and demonizing fantasy of the Jews’ negative role. The Jews accounted for barely 1 percent of the German population (cf. Friesel 1990, 104) and were hardly in a position to be Germany’s misfortune. Today no historian doubts that they had no influence whatsoever on developments in the Reich. The history of hostility toward Jews does, however, reveal one thing distinctly: it was not actual factors that played a role in the defamation and discrimination visited upon the Jews, but exclusively the mental images, the intellectual constructs that were firmly fixed collectively in the minds of non-Jews. These conceptualizations in turn rested on a dichotomous value system that categorized Judaism as an illegitimate, inferior religion per se, in comparison, for instance, with Christianity. Thus even the liberal historian Theodor Mommsen, who turned vehemently against Treitschke and declared his complete commitment to equal rights and to the integration of Jewish citizens, could not refrain from viewing Judaism itself as standing in the way of Jews’ full integration into Christian society:

(43) To be sure, the blame rests in part with the Jews. What the word “Christendom” once signified it no longer completely signifies; but it is still the only word that summarizes the character of today’s international civilization and in which millions and millions feel themselves united in a world so rich in peoples. [Mommsen 1880, 114]

This expression of antisemitism, which today we would recognize as unintentional, shows how deeply inscribed in Western structures of thought and feeling is the conceptualization of the Christian model and the sense of
its superiority. Rudolph Steiner, the founder of anthroposophy, was not an (active) antisemite either. He rejected antisemitism as representing “a danger both for Jews and for non-Jews” and as a “cultural sickness,” and he criticized the Protocols of the Elders of Zion as a forgery (Steiner 1919). But his texts contain passages that illustrate how normal it was in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to verbalize pejorative attributions and assessments vis-à-vis Jews:

(44) It can certainly not be denied that today Judaism still manifests itself as a closed entity and as such has intervened in the development of current conditions in many ways, and that in a manner that was in no sense favorable to Western cultural notions.

Judaism as such, however, has long since outlived itself, has no justification within the modern lives of the peoples, and the fact that it has nonetheless survived is a mistake on the part of world history whose consequences will be felt. Jews who have adapted to the Western cultural process should be in the best position to recognize that mistake, which consists of transplanting an ethical ideal from gray antiquity into the modern age, where it is completely useless. The insight must come first to the Jews that all their separatist strivings must be swallowed up by the spirit of modern times. [Steiner 1888, 152]

When we contemplate the nineteenth century, it becomes apparent that nothing—not increasing secularism in Europe or technological progress, not far-reaching political shifts or reforms in education and social welfare, not such early forms of democratic expression as the press and socially critical literature—eliminated the reservations against Jews and Judaism (see Reinharz 1975). Hostility toward Jews had long since become part of the culture, constituting the Zeitgeist as a habitualized communicative system, and was consequently felt to be normal, being transmitted through verbal expressions and idioms as well as through distorting images and caricatures. It formed part of everyday life and was taken so much for granted that even among the educated middle classes no critical reflection and questioning took place. Attitudes hostile toward Jews could be found at all levels of society and in almost all institutions and elites of the German Reich, and they had far-reaching consequences. German Jews in part experienced serious difficulties when it came
to obtaining civil-service jobs, memberships, and positions. In many circles and realms of life an openly articulated rejection of Jews was considered to be perfectly normal (cf., e.g., Leschnitzer 1956, 170; Volkov 2006, 256f.).

Antisemitism as State Doctrine: The “Final Solution” as the Ultimate Consequence of Judeophobia

Once it has established its premises, its starting point, ideological thinking is on principle immune to the influence of experience and to the teachings of reality. [Arendt 1955, 742]

During the Nazi period, racist antisemitism reached its pinnacle and eventually produced the eliminatory brand of antisemitism posited as an answer to the “Jewish question” that Dühring (1881, 119f.) had already articulated in the nineteenth century; it was an answer that called for exterminating a people viewed as inferior and noxious (cf., e.g., Bauer 1982; Longerich 1998; Friedländer 2006). Eliminatory antisemitism under the Nazis can be explained only against the background of centuries of enmity toward Jews. Any attempt to examine German policy toward the Jews in the Third Reich without looking at the historical context is bound to fail. The Nazis’ extreme hatred of Jews was not a temporary aberration during the years between 1933 and 1945, implemented by just a few deluded criminals; rather it had a two-thousand-year history of transformations behind it upon which Hitler and his henchmen could build.

At the very beginning of his political activities, Hitler, together with the other founding members of the National Socialist Party (see Adam 2003), enunciated an extreme version of antisemitism. The speech he gave in Munich in 1920, “Why We Are Antisemites,” already revealed his hatred, nourished by prejudices and specifically antisemitic conceptualizations. He resorted to the racial antisemitic stereotypes characteristic of the nineteenth century and combined them to argue for his specific construct of the enemy:

(45) And with all this we must see that there are no good and bad Jews here, but each of them works exactly according to the calling of his race, for the race, or let us rather say nation and what is linked to it, character, etc., resides, as the Jew himself explains, in the blood, and this blood compels
every individual to act according to these principles. [Hitler 1920, quoted in Phelps 1968, 415]

(46) For him there is no spiritual emotion, and as his forefather Abraham before him prostituted his wife, he sees nothing unusual in it when today he prostitutes girls . . . that all these pimps are only Hebrews. There's material that can be presented here that is hair-raising. To the Germanic sensibility there should be only one punishment here: the punishment would be death. [Hitler 1920, quoted in Phelps 1968, 414]

We see here a closed form of conceptualization according to which the naturally criminal Jew wants to rule the world and divide the capital accumulated through thievery among fellow Jews, using it to harm the German people. Here the extreme dualism characteristic of antisemitism finds the expression that turns up repeatedly in Mein Kampf: human existence is viewed as a struggle for existence between Aryans and Jews, who stand for good and evil in the world (Hitler 1934, 317). Constructs of the enemy that combine racist and political elements give rise to fictional notions of conspiracies forged by the Jewish-Bolshevist “world enemy” to achieve universal hegemony:

(47) . . . the merciless universal Jew fights for his power over the peoples. [Hitler 1934, 738]

Hitler revealed as early as 1920 that he favored a particular “solution” for the Jewish problem, as indicated in (46). Thirteen years before his seizure of power, the platform of the National Socialist Workers’ Party and all his other proclamations featured the “Jewish question” as the ideological basis. In 1931 he predicted to German Jewry that in case of a confrontation it would be “crushed under the wheel of history” (conversation between Hitler and Breiting, June 1931, quoted in Calic 1968, 94f.; cf. Adam 2003, 27ff.). In this connection the 1920 statement by Gottfried Feder, one of the founders of the Nazi Party, on the party’s fundamental worldview is significant:

(48) Antisemitism is in a sense the emotional underpinning of our movement. [Feder 1927, 17]

Hatred for Jews amounted to an emotional dogma within the Nazi program. In the guise of racial theory, resentment was elevated to the status of a science, on the one hand, and to the main plank of the party platform, on
the other. After 1933 antisemitism became official state doctrine. The hostility previously articulated in society by individuals now acquired an official legal basis and was institutionalized across the board as binding. To remove Jews from German society was not an idea that had economic, social, or political motivation; rather it followed from the resentment-driven ideology of the Nazi regime:35

(49) Certainly the Jew is also a human being. None of us has ever cast doubt on that. But the flea is also an animal—just not a pleasant one. Since the flea is not a pleasant animal, we do not have the duty before ourselves and our conscience to protect and care for it and allow it to flourish, but rather to render it harmless. That is exactly how it is with the Jews. [Goebbels 1943, 89]

In accordance with these views, antisemitism found expression at all public communicative levels. Posters, newspapers, shops, kiosks, and the walls of buildings everywhere displayed verbally aggressive sayings with demands, warnings, curses, and threats such as “Germans, defend yourselves, don’t buy from Jews!” (in Berlin, 1933; cf. Königseder 2011, 61), “Death to Juda” (in Berlin, 1933), “None should hunger, none be cold, but Jews should perish, none grow old” (in Germany, 1935; cf. Améry 1966/2008, 35). All the mass media spread anti-Jewish propaganda. Along with the unfettered verbal aggressions of Goebbels and the numerous vicious attacks by various Gauleiters who indulged in threats of violence directed at Jews, from 1934 on it was principally the Stürmer that every week spewed crude, hate-filled, nakedly violent verbalisms in which animal and disease images predominated. Display cases were set up all through Germany where this antisemitic tabloid was posted. As early as 1933 the Nazis had begun to normalize slogans hostile toward Jews (e.g., in the form of exclusion from professions). Terror and violence were increasingly legalized by the state bureaucracy.

All verbalizations in the Nazi period mirror the conceptual and emotional devaluation of Jews and Judaism and reveal semantic constants present in all forms of defamation, discrimination, delegitimation, demonization, and dehumanization (see chapter 5).

The conceptualization of Jews as glo bal ev il was the basis for the Nazis’ eliminatory antisemitism, which led to the Final Solution within the framework of their closed ideological view of the world and an immanent “logic”
that lacked any basis in reality. From the Nuremberg race laws, a straight unbroken line (cf., e.g., Longerich 1998; Browning 2003), ideologically homogeneous and bureaucratically perfected, led—by way of public stigmatization, exclusion from all realms of normal life, denial of all rights, and refusal to recognize Jews’ humanity—to the gas chambers. The race laws “for the protection of German blood” laid out with painstaking exactitude who was a “full, three-quarter, half, or quarter Jew.” Paragraphs stipulating the smallest details regulated the “sorting” of those thus classified, as well as their relatives and offspring. On the basis of this legislation Himmler demanded “for 2nd-grade mixed-race persons” a “process . . . such as is used in animal husbandry” and, “in case of inferiority,” sterilization (Adam 2003, 328).

The minutes of the Wannsee Conference, called to arrange for implementation of the Final Solution, reads like the text of a pest-control company describing, bureaucratically and emotionlessly, the procedures for eliminating vermin and filth. In this case, the fact that those classified as pests and listed as “filth” are human beings is masked out. The radical approach of the Final Solution was consistent with the Nazis’ closed worldview. The Final Solution corresponded to the “reason” given, namely to exterminate the Jews for the benefit of mankind, although the Jews were highly productive and fully integrated into German economic, scholarly, and artistic life, and far from representing a danger enriched German society by their presence. In October 1943, the SS-Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler offered a drastic example of the Nazis’ peculiar “reality.” In a secret speech to high officers of the SS, Himmler said:

(50) I wish to mention a very difficult subject here, with complete frankness. . . . I mean the evacuation of Jews, the extermination of the Jewish people . . . This is a chapter of our history in which we can take great pride. . . . We had the moral right, we had the duty toward our people, to do away with this people that wanted to do away with us. [Himmler, 4 October 1943; see Smith and Peterson 1974, 203]

We make it too easy for ourselves if we decide, applying our modern sensibility, that Goebbels or Himmler was mentally disturbed. In the context of Nazi ideology they were not, and they were not seen as disturbed by those around them. They basked in a personal conviction that they were doing the right thing.
I believe, gentlemen, that you know me well enough to realize that I am not a bloodthirsty person and not a man who takes pleasure or enjoyment in anything harsh that he must do. On the other hand, I have such sound nerves and such a great sense of duty—if I do say so myself—that when I recognize something as necessary, I carry it out, uncompromisingly. [Himmler, 24 May 1944; see Smith and Peterson 1974, 206]

In this case Himmler was talking about the murder of Jewish women and children. As Himmler understood it, they had to be killed because otherwise “the children would grow up to be the avengers . . . who would then do away with our children and grandchildren.” Today we find it impossible to imagine such an absence of feeling, such absolute mercilessness and inhumanity, but it forms part and parcel of a closed anti-Jewish view of the world, a monstrous imaginative construct indebted to a long tradition and explicable only by reference to that tradition (see also Bauer 2001 and chapter 8, under Cruelty and Emotional Coldness). Here we can see the unique aspect of this phenomenon, that Jews were exterminated simply as Jews, without economic, social, or political justification. The “ideal of salvation” occupied the foreground of Nazi thinking: freeing the world of Jews. Hitler maintained his demented beliefs to the very end:

Above all I pledge the leadership of the nation and its followers to strict observance of the racial laws and to ruthless resistance against the world-poisoners of all peoples, international Jewry. [Berlin, 29 April 1945 (Hitler’s last will and testament, 1945, 10)]

We have become accustomed to using relatively abstract terms in scholarly and societal discourse about the Nazi period—expressions and phrases such as brutality, inhumanity, Jewish victims of racist Nazi policies, Nazi atrocities—but the loss of concreteness that such impersonal usage entails protects our consciousness and our feelings from the enormity of the caesura in civilization, the sheer horror of the Nazis’ monstrous realpolitik. One must try to imagine vividly and specifically what happened between 1933 and 1945: a segment of the population in Germany was declared to be the enemy of the people and a pest, was robbed of all its rights, was officially and legislatively designated as inferior by the Nuremberg racial laws, and was finally loaded into cattle cars
and sent to its death. All these activities were carried out painstakingly and precisely, with meticulous bureaucratic organization and record keeping, and with rational planning. The bureaucratic efficiency, involving all important organizational structures in Germany, ultimately resulted in the disappearance of 6 million human beings, who literally went up in smoke.

Hostility toward Jews after 1945: Minimization of the Caesura in Civilization and Withholding of Empathy

After 1945, once the dimensions of the crimes against the Jews became widely known and unmistakable, the transformation in the collective consciousness that this caesura in civilization should have brought about did not occur. To be sure, Judeophobic images and texts were officially banned, their reproduction publicly subjected to sanctions and taboos, but there was no truly probing reflection, no comprehensive critical analysis of the reasons and motives for the hatred and the extermination policy. Instead the Holocaust was usually described as resulting from the obsessions of a few Nazis, an explanation that led to decisive misinterpretation and a failure to take into account the extent to which Jews were hated. Neither the institutional elites nor the general population sufficiently explored the hatred of Jews that had existed in almost all parts of society as an integral part of the much-invoked Western way of thinking and had belonged for centuries to the general culture. Thus the opportunity was missed to initiate a thorough rethinking of this tradition. A few isolated and halfhearted attempts could not eliminate from the collective consciousness or from linguistic usage in a few years what had been passed down for centuries (on postwar antisemitism, cf. Stern 1991a, b, 1993).

Both Wolgast (2001) in his solid historical analyses and Kämper (2005, 2007) in her comprehensive discussions of language and discourse document, independently of one another, that no intensive and far-reaching processing of the Nazis’ antisemitic actions took place in the institutions that bore responsibility for such work. Instead, as early as 1945–1946 members of universities, political parties, and churches launched efforts to relativize what had happened and to ward off guilt. Analyses of university speeches, pastoral letters, and political parties’ policy statements reveal that although the Nazi regime and its violent tactics were unanimously condemned, at the same time no
reckoning with antisemitism took place, and the significance of the Holocaust was minimized. In pastoral letters issued in the summer of 1945, the German bishops did not so much as mention the murder of Jews (Wolgast 2001, 188). In the “Fulda Pastoral Letter” of 23 August 1945 the crimes did receive mention, but the reference to the Jews adopted usage characteristic of racist ideology, calling them “non-Aryans” and “members of a foreign tribe” (Wolgast 2001, 191). The pastoral letters issued by Archbishop Gröber of Freiburg display the same tendency to minimize and cast doubt on the Holocaust that was typical of the Catholic Church in the immediate postwar period: the leading figures of the Nazi regime were characterized as outliers, referred to by phrases such as “out of touch with reality” and “shortsighted nationalists” (pastoral bulletin for Freiburg 1945, quoted in Wolgast 2001, 197). Gröber, like many others, described the victims as “people of a foreign race.” This usage reveals the unbroken power of racist and Germanophilic antisemitism and the way in which use of the phraseology that went with it had become habitual. The Protestant Church, too, hesitated to confront the extermination of the Jews. In 1933 the church had welcomed the Nazi takeover euphorically, and after the collapse it did not distance itself appropriately from antisemitism (Wolgast 2001, 226). Much the same problem manifested itself in the case of politicians and academics: the speeches university presidents delivered after 1945 offered no evidence that they had seen the light or engaged in self-criticism. The scholarly criteria of rationality, respect for truth, and objectivity were nowhere in evidence (Wolgast 2001, 328ff.); the speakers did not enter into any discussion of the causes of hatred of Jews or of the mass murder inflicted upon them. In sum, no comprehensive, serious, or jarring debate over the antisemitic Nazi ideology took place, and its deep roots in Western culture and the essential causes of the Holocaust remained untouched. Germany’s elite institutions instead minimized their own culpability and responsibility while blaming the Nazi inner circle as they clung with unbroken certainty to their traditional values. Repressing, reinterpreting, and minimizing what had happened emerged as the dominant tendencies when it came to the extermination of the Jews.

Kämper (2005) has applied the methodology of discourse analysis to the ways in which Nazism and its crimes were spoken of after the war. Her findings confirm that no fundamental confrontation with the past took place, no critical assessment of the present and future. Instead of processing and
rethinking, repression and minimization were the order of the day. Kämper sees “refusal to accept culpability” and “rationalization” as characteristic of most postwar discourse and points to the repeated emphasis on “just following orders,” fulfilling one’s “duty,” and having no knowledge of what was going on as a standard feature of the way Germans spoke of the recent past (496f.). Traditional Western values were repeatedly invoked, and integral to those values was the old hatred of Jews.

No attention was paid to the fact that antisemitism as a cultural and historical phenomenon, as part of the Western heritage, had been passed down for centuries collectively through all communicative structures (Volkov 1990, 2000, 2006). Instead, starting immediately after the war, the singularity of the persecution of Jews as specific to the Nazis’ violent policies and racist ideology was emphasized.

Correspondingly, the realpolitik of the day called for concentrating on the reconstruction of Germany and on the country’s future. Despite the so-called denazification, former Nazi functionaries often managed almost effortlessly to obtain high and responsible positions in politics, the economy, and culture (see Frei 1997). Rebuilding the war-ravaged country took priority, and looking back suited neither the political leadership nor the general populace. The decisive line that should have been imposed after the Holocaust because of its unique monstrousness thus never got drawn, either cognitively or emotionally.

Horror, shame, guilt, compassion for the victims and the survivors of the extermination camps: these feelings did not come to the fore, but rather self-pity and hope for a better life in the future. Embarrassed silence and lack of interest, as well as defensiveness and indifference, marked the attitude toward the Jews, dead and alive. The following text exemplifies this attitude:

No one suffering from a severe illness will occupy himself in his sickbed with studying fever charts, and it is entirely understandable that in the Germany of 1947, where hunger and cold have become our near neighbors, the concentration-camp literature cannot find a large receptive audience. Did the prisoners suffer hunger? So do we. Did the prisoners freeze? So do we. Did the dead pile up in front of the crematoria? If things continue this way, that will soon be happening again. Were the prisoners locked up? Thousands of prisoners of war were as well. [Borchert 1947/2009, 503]
The statements of the much-praised postwar writer Wolfgang Borchert, who in his plays and stories dwelled on Germans’ sufferings in the war’s aftermath and found not a shred of empathy for the Jewish victims of German mass murder, offer insight into the attitudes prevailing among Germans. The crimes against the Jews are relativized by means of silence, their suffering placed on the same plane as the deprivations suffered by the population in postwar Germany and thereby robbed of its true dimensions, which exceed all bounds of humanity.\(^4\) Equating the consequences of war and violent exercise of power with systematic extermination reveals the absence of any critical awareness of or willingness to develop empathy. Viewing as equivalent two dimensions of suffering that were in no way comparable also made it possible for Germans to shake off the burden of guilt and moral responsibility (a tendency that can be observed to this day among some in Germany).

Between 1945 and the late 1960s one could often hear people in Germany say, “That wouldn’t have happened under Hitler.” The expression typifies the kind of linguistic utterance through which minimization tended to occur (in part unconsciously). By highlighting the positive aspects of the control the Nazi regime exerted over the populace, the speaker simultaneously blocks out the dimension of ethnic murder, downplaying its relevance. This expression, still in use decades after the collapse of the Nazi regime, epitomizes the way many Germans treat the Holocaust. It focuses on characteristics of the Nazis’ policies that are recalled as positive (curbing crime—the conservative notion summed up in the expression law and order).\(^4\) The enormity of the murder of the Jews takes a back seat to Hitler’s success, for otherwise that success would not be worth mentioning.

On right-wing extremist and neo-Nazi websites this stock phrase can still be found (cf. the right-wing extremist platform thiazi.net, not shut down until 2012, under the heading “Sayings of Mama and Papa”).

To feel grief and pain, to develop empathy, Germans would have had to realize that an integral and culturally vital segment of their society had been isolated and destroyed—not an external group that could be classified as foreign and non-German. But because this basis for identification was lacking and was also not invoked, what resulted was the “inability to mourn” (see Mitscherlich and Mitscherlich 1967) or to experience shame. Many Germans felt that the official morality of shame and responsibility had been imposed on them from without. Their emotional resistance in turn gave rise to a post-
war form of antisemitism that the Jewish psychoanalyst Zvi Rex (quoted in Heinsohn 1988, 115) summed up in the telling formulation, “The Germans will never forgive us for Auschwitz!”

Constitutive elements of postwar antisemitism are the relativizing or denial of Germany’s culpability for the ethnic murder as well as the projection of guilt onto the Jews: a modern version of perpetrator–victim reversal. This antisemitism born of resistance to culpability is often described in the scholarly literature as “not in spite of but precisely because of Auschwitz” (see Benz 2001, 55). In fact, however, both dimensions are important if one wants to understand postwar antisemitism. Despite the Auschwitz experience, many Germans did not fundamentally alter their attitude toward Jews (and accordingly the traditional clichés remained in use in everyday discourse), and because of Auschwitz additional stereotypes developed based on denial of responsibility and repression of shame. Among these the following stand out: JEWS AS DISTURBERS OF THE PEACE AND IRRITATING ADMONISHERS; JEWS AS EXPLOITERS OF THE HOLOCAUST AND (OPINION) BLACKMAILERS. Such concepts must not be considered secondary, since they grow out of traditional Judeophobic conceptualizations and are simply applied to the current situation, and modified or elaborated accordingly (a procedure characteristic of centuries during which Judeophobic images and forms of articulation underwent repeated transformation).

The allegation that Jews exploit the memory of the Holocaust and act as leeches on society when they make financial demands on the Federal Republic of Germany matches the traditional conceptualization of Jews as GREEDY PARASITES AND HARMFUL PESTS. The stereotype of Jews as IRRITATING, IRRECONCILABLE, AND VENGEFUL ADMONISHERS is a modern version of the image of Jews, already current in the Middle Ages, as disturbers of the peace; it also rests on the conceptualization of Jews as not being Germans. Holocaust denial, paired with the notion of a conspiracy of Jews to invent their own extermination in order to put the world under moral pressure and extort money, goes with the characterization of Jews as liars and is linked with the stereotype of the GREEDY HAGGLER AND MONEY-GRUBBER. The anti-Jewish concepts remain, but the forms in which they are expressed undergo transformation and modification according to current social and political circumstances (cf. also Bergmann 2001, 38; Simmel 1946/2002a, 12; von Braun 2004, 11; Kreis 2005, 21).
One change very important for this study did take place after 1945, however: after the end of the war, the articulation of antisemitic thinking that had been practiced openly and publicly for centuries was formally prohibited. The communicability of verbal antisemitic expression thus experienced limitation; the latitude for expression of Judeophobia shrank, and the discourse moved from the public to the private realm. This development did not mean, however, that representations of attitudes hostile toward Jews or stereotypes also disappeared.

Rather, anti-Jewish stereotypes can be identified in the democratic, established public sphere across all political camps and are disseminated by all sorts of actors more widely than years ago. [Rensmann 2004, 487]

Legal and social taboos or sanctions imposed on explicit antisemitism gave rise to new forms of communication. Judeophobic contents were, and still are, transmitted (except in right-wing-extremist circles) as indirect speech acts (and realized as “circumlocutions”; cf., e.g., Rensmann, 2004; Bergmann and Heitmeyer, 2005a; see chapter 2).

While up to 1945 antisemites also described themselves openly and without embarrassment as such, this has not been the case since revelation of the crime of the Holocaust. Today people who hold views hostile toward Jews style themselves “critical thinkers” or “peace activists,” speaking “in the name of justice and human rights” and out of “concern for world peace.” Marin (1997, 2000) characterizes this seemingly nonfanatical and nonracist everyday antisemitism—in a phrase that is still accurate—as “antisemitism without antisemites” (see also Améry 1969, on “honorable antisemitism,” and Schwarz-Friesel 2010a, on “legitimate antisemitism”).

This phenomenon holds decisive significance for the following observations on current Judeophobic linguistic patterns and communication processes, insofar as the ways in which antisemitism finds expression nowadays, and more publicly, work primarily through implication and/or through anti-Israel views, presented as “criticism of Israel” (see chapter 6). This development enlarges the communicative space in society for verbal antisemitism.
Present-Day Hostility toward Jews: The “New” Antisemitism of the Twenty-First Century

For some years antisemitism researchers have been debating whether certain alterations in public communication, the increasing acts of violence against Jewish institutions and facilities worldwide, tendencies in mass-media reporting on Israel, as well as certain types of criticism of Israel make it imperative that one speak of a “new antisemitism” in the twenty-first century (cf., e.g., the discussion in Naumann 2002; Rabinovici et al. 2004; see also Kaufmann and Orlowski 2002; Nonn 2008, 101ff.; Schwarz-Friesel et al. 2010, 2ff.). What gave rise to the debate was in part the discrepancy between the results obtained by certain opinion polls and the analyses of public discourses, as well as the increase in antisemitically motivated acts of violence.

No doubt exists as to the changes that manifest themselves in contemporary hostility toward Jews, yet the classification and assessment of these phenomena and their effects occur in different ways: some scholars see the expressions of Judeophobia as adhering to the old patterns, with the semantics remaining constant, which makes the current phenomenon a variant of postwar antisemitism, while other scholars see a qualitatively (and quantitatively) new phenomenon of Judeophobia that represents (or might represent) the basis for its spread to the majority in society.

Rabinovici et al. (2004, 8) see an essential difference between the old and new antisemitism in the fact that previous patterns of coming to terms with the past, focused primarily on the Nazi era and the Holocaust, no longer have any hold over people. According to them, the central element of the current hostility is the problematic existence of the conflict in the Middle East and the resulting challenge to the legitimacy of the state of Israel as the political form of Jewish sovereignty. At the same time, for Rabinovici (2006, 247), the global interlacing of European and Muslim antisemitism plays an essential role:

In addition to the old religious and racist hatred of Jews, a new form has arisen that operates on a global scale, that no longer sees the “Jew” as a “rootless cosmopolitan” but damns him as an incarnation of Israel. The murderous antisemitism of radical Islamism is new, as is the approval that this hatred and the suicide attacks receive from some intellectuals, who were less tolerant toward classic right-wing racism.
Goldhagen (2004, 93f., 97) likewise emphasizes this component as “globalized antisemitism” (cf. also Kreis 2005, 23; Wistrich 2005, 2, 2007, 2010). The fixation on Israel as the predominant characteristic of contemporary antisemitism induces Rensmann to categorize this phenomenon as anti-Zionism (Rensmann 2004, 87; see also Gessler 2004, 126). Here we have a form of communication that purports simply to criticize Israeli policies but in fact contests Israel’s right to exist (see also Klug 2004, 227, who describes this as “new anti-Semitism”). Although Israel is criticized, what is actually meant is the state as a symbol of Jewish life. This form of communication gains acceptance as politically correct and can be openly articulated (see also Schapira and Hafner 2006).

Because the current manifestations of antisemitism reveal traditional stereotypes, those who argue for the thesis of continuity see nothing new in them (cf. Bergmann 2001, 38; but see also endnote 51, this chapter); on the basis of its high degree of adaptability, antisemitism today also appears as anti-Zionism or criticism of Israel (Benz 2004, 24; Bergmann 2006, 117f.; see also, e.g., Quadfasel 2005, 188). Holz (2005, 57, 59) characterizes the phenomenon of altered antisemitism after 1945 as “democratic antisemitism,” meaning a hostility toward Jews that can be expressed in the democratic public and whose core consists of the process of coming to terms with the past by reversing perpetrator and victim. For Holz, anti-Zionism and anti-Israelism, if they can be assigned to this core, thus represent nothing more than adapted variants of so-called secondary antisemitism. Like Bergmann, Holz rejects the term “new antisemitism” for current manifestations because he sees the term as positing changes to fundamental semantic patterns that would result in the creation of a new form of antisemitism (cf. Holz 2005, 11). Holz does recognize a new aspect in the strong focus on Israel within the most varied political currents and population groups. Typical of this “anti-Zionist antisemitism” is, according to him, the distinction between “Jewish” as a religious category and “Zionist” as a political category, such that only Zionists (ergo, the state of Israel) figure as a political enemy, but not Jews as a collective entity, race, or religion (cf. Holz 2005, 43). Holz emphasizes at the same time that this anti-Zionist antisemitism is becoming increasingly acceptable among the majority of the democratic public (Holz 2005, 97; see also Müller 2006, 309). Thus adherents of the theory of continuity also recognize changes in the communicative use of antisemitism but do not consider them a significant innovation.
Among the most notable communicative events that have specifically shaped the political discourse in Germany and widened the scope of what is permissible to say must be counted the Goldhagen debate of 1996, the debate over Martin Walser’s speech in 1998, the Bundestag debate over the Berlin Holocaust memorial in 1999, the 2001 debate over reparations for forced laborers from the Nazi period, and the role of Jewish organizations, as well as the 2002 Möllemann–Friedman debate and the controversy over anti-Jewish positions in the Free Democratic Party (see Rensmann 2004, 60, 2006, 44; Reinfrank and Ebbrecht 2004; Nonn 2008, 102ff.; Pallade 2008a, b; Reinfrank 2008). These public debates resulted in a shift in the areas considered taboo. In particular Martin Walser’s speech when he accepted the Peace Prize of the German Publishing Industry represents a dividing line, because here antisemitic defensive aggression toward reminders of the Nazis’ crimes could reveal and establish itself publicly for the first time without eliciting any unified public condemnation: “Here an intellectual moral figure had articulated openly and with pathos something that up to then had been largely taboo in mainstream discourse or at least considered inappropriate” (Pallade 2008a, 321f.). The new quality of the discourse since the debate over the Walser speech can be seen in the fact that antisemitic utterances encounter less and less resistance and are regarded as “normal.” Furthermore, the ideological positions of political fringe groups have gained greater acceptance in the political and social mainstream (cf. Reinfrank 2008, 109; Pallade 2008a, 340). Inappropriate and historically insensitive verbal formulations like antisemitism bludgeon have become slogans that can be used in polite society. Jürgen W. Möllemann took advantage of these changed communicative conditions for his right-wing-populist election campaign in 2002; but a central feature of his public persona is the linking of resistance to memory with anti-Zionism, in the context of which the perpetrator–victim reversal as applied to the Nazi past receives justification from an invocation of Israel’s misdeeds (cf. Holz 2005, 23).

In the research, two phenomena figure as the primary sources of motivation and the catalyst for current antisemitic tendencies: the outbreak of the Second Intifada and the escalation of the Middle East conflict (with the dimension of international terrorism since September 11, 2001, playing a role; cf. Beck 2003; Chesler 2004, 10; Reinfrank and Ebbrecht 2004, 50; Bergmann 2006, 118; Müller 2006, 309, Reinfrank 2008, 110; Wetzel 2008, 88; FRA 2009, 24). Thus Beck (2003) speaks of the “spillover from the Intifada” and the “globaliza-
tion of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict” because, as he sees it, hostility toward Israel in many places (locally) and all over the world (globally) explodes in aggression and violence against Jewish representatives and institutions and thus spreads from the Middle East.56

Independently of the debate over whether the current changes that can be observed should be considered new or old-new, traditional or innovative, the following can be established: As an object of hatred, Israel occupies the central position in current antisemitism. In the twenty-first century the Middle East conflict provides the overarching pretext for the expression of antisemitic opinions and serves as a catalyst for hostility toward Jews. Anti-Israelism is communicated not only by extremists on the right or left but also by academics and intellectuals, as well as representatives of the mainstream, since this attitude can pass for politically correct. This situation is not confined to one region but is globalized; that is, hostility toward Israel appears all over the world, disseminated through the mass media (cf. Chesler 2004, 76–86, Reinfrank 2008, 107f.).

Verbal violence in everyday and public discourse on Israel has taken on a new cast; increasingly prominent in the mainstream communication realm are virulent forms of denigration (see chapter 6, under Tools of Demonization). Another new feature is the willingness manifested by more and more people the world over to agree with drastically pejorative and derealizing statements about the Jewish state of Israel (see, e.g., EUMC reports of 2003 and 2004, the results of the 2009 ADL survey, and the 2012 Forsa survey [Weber 2012]). Yet another new feature is the unlimited access to and massive dissemination of verbal antisemitisms (as well as anti-Jewish cartoons) provided on the Internet, which as a virtual world and communication system has long since become an essential feature of the real world (see Marx and Schwarz-Friesel 2013) and contributes in a crucial way to transmitting explicitly Judeophobic utterances as well as anti-Israeli hate speech quickly and effectively to countless recipients. Yet antisemitic thinking is by no means restricted to right-wing-extremist, fundamentalist, or Islamist websites (see Wetzel 2005), but also appears in mainstream Internet forums and chat rooms, and on social network sites (see Schwarz-Friesel 2013a). As a result, anti-Jewish utterances in public communication can come to seem habitual and normal and become firmly established.

Thus antisemitism in Germany is clearly a contemporary phenomenon, by no means merely historical and not confined to the extreme fringes of
society. Despite all attempts at education, it is firmly anchored in parts of the (educated and not radical) mainstream. Yet with the exception of research on antisemitism, this reality still receives far too little attention and is viewed too seldom as problematic or worrisome.

The discrepancy is striking between, on the one hand, the emotions of those affected (i.e., the Jewish communities and institutions; cf., e.g., Pallade 2008a, b) and the observations and analyses of researchers (for the most part coextensive) and, on the other hand, the viewpoint of large segments of the population:

While Jews are affected by antisemitism, and with justification feel threatened as a minority by violent Judeophobia, as indicated, for instance, by safety measures still necessary for Jewish facilities and synagogues in Europe, today portions of the majority society view what they consider largely groundless charges of antisemitism as a serious social problem and antisemitism as a phenomenon belonging to European history. [Rensmann and Schoeps 2008, 11]

Despite decades during which antisemitism was officially rejected and discredited, despite intensive attempts at education and efforts on the part of governments to counter antisemitic violence and attitudes, large portions of the population are by no means sensitized to the dangers of stereotyped thinking and rhetoric that has the effect of creating prejudice and images of an enemy. The inhibition threshold for articulating verbal antisemitic sentiments even in public has become markedly lower in recent years (cf. Schwarz-Friesel 2009a, b, 2010a, b, 2013a), and receptivity to stereotypical Judeophobic and/or anti-Israeli comments has risen. In light of current research findings, the thesis of a “collective learning process” with respect to antisemitism that Bergmann (1997, 502) thought he discerned in Germany and in democratic discourse can no longer be confirmed without qualifications (see also Rensmann 2004, 490ff., 224ff.; Nonn 2008, 103).

The Bundestag’s expert commission thus comes to the following conclusion in its 2011 report:

The report was able to show that in the majority of German society antisemitic attitudes are present, with considerable variations in form and
content. These attitudes in turn are based on widespread prejudices and deeply rooted clichés, or in simple ignorance about Jews and Judaism. In view of modern forms of communication such as exist in particular on the Internet, dissemination of such thinking can hardly be prevented. The far-reaching taboo imposed on antisemitism in public discourse that was previously an important feature of the Federal Republic is thus in danger of losing much of its effectiveness. What seems particularly dangerous is the receptivity of right-wing extremists to antisemitic attitudes that reach far into the social mainstream and have not been sufficiently ostracized. Determined countermeasures must receive a high priority, not least in view of the devastating historical effects of Nazi antisemitism. [BMI 2011, 182]

**Conclusion**

Hostility toward Jews was and is an enduring component of Western patterns of thought and speech. Centuries of defamation and stigmatization of Jews have left deep traces in the collective memory and in patterns of communicative language usage. If we look at history, we can discern not only the long tradition of thinking and feeling that is hostile toward Jews, but also certain patterns of verbal stigmatization and defamation mirroring semantic and conceptual constants that have been preserved and passed down through the ages. The stereotype of the Jew as the foreigner, the other, is a concept used for categorization and devaluation that has survived for two millennia in a number of variations. Depending on religious, ideological, or political perspectives, Jews are alien and different because, according to their critics, they do not represent the true faith or because they represent a race of their own or because their thinking is hostile, their behavior indecent and destructive. When taken together and connected to each other, the additional specific stereotypes that have arisen over the centuries constitute a cognitive system of beliefs that provides mental support to the emotional resentment against Jews. Language serves as an archive for components of collective consciousness and makes them transparent through forms that carry meaning. Utterances hostile toward Jews transport and transmit intellectual stereotypes that form the basis of fundamental antisemitic attitudes. Therefore, they contribute decisively to preserving templates of thinking and clichés. Thus patterns of linguistic usage activate and reactivate anti-Jewish
attitudes. Correspondingly, the ways in which Jews and Judaism are named and described reveal an unbroken continuity in anti-Jewish concepts and patterns of mental devaluation, such as dehumanization, demonization, and derealization, through imaginary constructs and conspiracy theories.

On the one hand, the following chapter will show which traditional mental stereotypes expressing hostility toward Jews have survived through the ages in the Germans’ cultural and communicative memory and are still used today, despite all efforts at education since the Holocaust. On the other hand, it will show the extent to which cognitive representations of antisemitism find expression in new formulations, but also to what extent old anti-Jewish conceptualizations are currently undergoing modification or elaboration.