

ATTI DELLA CONFERENZA INTERNAZIONALE

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Socialism of Fools: Anti-Jewish Anticapitalism and Ideological Polarization in Modern Europe

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The questions I am posing are as follows: was there a relationship between the making of the self-regulating market society and the social hatred against the Jews which came out in the XIXth century? Why were the Jews after their first legal emancipation identified as a parasitical group, as a new “financial feudality”, and assimilated to high finance and to the international bank, both engaged in conspiring for the conquest of world power?

And furthermore: why did social hatred, developed and expressed in the XIXth century through the political language of the reaction to citizenship rights, become manifest in the most various political groups, from Christian and Catholic nationalists and socialists? Was there a relationship with that new phenomenon Jacob Talmon defined as the modern “ideological polarization”?

At the same time these new phenomena were described by using ancient words, the language of the traditional controversy against usury and lending money, the “medieval” polemics against the “economic behaviour” of the Jews.

The competition between Christianity and Talmudic Judaism has connoted medieval and modern European history, but the competition has also taken a social feature from the XIIth century on. Then, from the XVI-IIth the revolution of human rights – man and citizen – has put an end to all forms of Jews’ discrimination and has proclaimed fraternity in equality and freedom. But such ideals have soon got into conflict with economic and social inequalities produced by market economy.

The social classes of the Ancient Regime soon reacted against the new bourgeoisies, but in a short time the Jewish élites were considered and rep-



resented as social classes of speculators, bankers and new usurers, who had taken advantage of the revolution of rights to carry out economic activities hostile to the community. The social hatred against the market, finance and speculation was addressed exclusively to the Jews and, in the society of the rights, founded on liberty equality and fraternity, the first germs of fratricidal hatred broke out¹.

II. The industrial civilization was founded on the cardinal principle of the *self-regulating market*.

What had seemed to be an extraordinary progress in technologies and in industrial production appeared in the long run an immense social and cultural catastrophe, and the society's inevitable reactions of defence ended up by blocking the mechanism of market economy up to the point of its total collapse which occurred in 1929: the fascist solution can be defined as a reform of market economy which had been achieved at the price of the extirpation of democratic institutions².

Polanyi's diagnosis coincides with the one of the Italian historian Federico Chabod: the cultural catastrophe of Europe had been hatched at least from 1870, since the French Prussian war, when «the principles of humanity had been excluded»³ from policy and the greatest European scientists and philosophers got ready to celebrate the cult of the military State and of industrial economy. The enchantment of the German State, its military and industrial power, its science and technology, easily changed into the assertion of the supremacy of the German spirit (*germanentum*), against democracy.

1. S. Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, transl. by J. Strachey, (S. Strachey editor with the collaboration of A. Freud J., Institute of Psychoanalysis London, Hogarth Press, 1939, vol. XXIII. See Y.H. Yerushalmi, *Freud's Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable*, New Haven-London, Yale University Press, 1993, pp. 123 ff.

2. K. Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, New York, Holt, Rineheart & Winston Inc., 1944 (tr. it. *La Grande Trasformazione*, Torino, Einaudi, 1974, p. 297).

3. F. Chabod, *Storia della politica estera italiana dal 1870 al 1896*, Bari, Laterza, 1951, p. 139. See G. Sasso, *Il guardiano della storiografia. Profilo di Federico Chabod e altri saggi*, Napoli, Guida, 1915, pp. 33-134.

«I have stated the opinion that democracy and politics are extraneous and poisonous for German character [...]. I am deeply convinced that German people will never be able to love political democracy for the only reason that they cannot love politics itself, and that the so much despised State of the established authority is and will always be the form of State most adequate to them»⁴. So Thomas Mann wrote in the end of the First World War.

Thomas Mann would soon repent of such a sentence. But still in 1932, on the eve of Hitler's victory, Ernst Curtius, one of the most refined German humanists and members of Stefan George's circle, repeated that «the French and German notions of civilization are completely different in their roots»⁵. Curtius, Mann, Jaspers, Johann Huizinga or Benedetto Croce all expressed their uneasiness for mass society: for them, the end of the liberal society had been the final crisis of civilization⁶, the «end of the world»⁷.

«We clearly see how almost all the things, which in other times appeared steady and sacred, have started being shaky: truth and humanity, reason and right. [...] Everywhere, there is doubt about the durability of the social system we live in, indefinite anxiety about the forthcoming tomorrow and the sense of decay and of the sunset of civilization»⁸. The author of these words was the Dutch historian Johan Huizinga, imprisoned in the Nazi camp of de Steeg in Holland, where he would die on 1st February 1945. He identified in anti-Semitism one of the most serious symptoms of the “present catastrophe”⁹.

4. T. Mann, *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, Berlin, Fischer Verlag, 1918, pp. 49-50. See H. Kunzke, *Thomas Mann. Das Leben als Kunstwerk*, Munchen, CH Beck. HG Verlag, 2009 (tr. it. *La vita come opera d'arte*, Milano, Mondadori, 2005, pp. 221-254).

5. E.R. Curtius, *Essai sur la France*, Paris, Grasset, 1932, p. 18 and L. Spitzer, *Ernst Robert Curtius*, in «Hispanic Review», n. 25, 1957, pp. 24-25.

6. See B. Croce's final notes in *Storia d'Europa nel secolo XIX*, Bari, Laterza, 1932, pp. 285-307, [and K. Jaspers, *Geistige Zituation der Zeit*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 1999 (Leipzig-Berlin, 1931), pp. 31-36].

7. I refer to the analysis proposed by E. de Martino, *La fine del mondo. Contributo all'analisi delle apocalissi culturali*, Torino, Einaudi, 1977, p. 493.

8. J. Huizinga, *In de schaduwen van morgen. Een diagnose van het geestelijk lijden van onzen tijd*, Harlem, H.T. Tjeenk Willink & Zoon, 1935, (tr. it. *La crisi della civiltà*, Torino, Einaudi, 1937, n. ed. with an introductory essay by D. Cantimori, Torino 1962, p. 3).

9. See the unpublished *Geschonden Wereld*, published after the death of Joahn Huizinga by Huizinga Estate, Velp, Netherlands and translated into Italian by E. Pocar: *Lo scempio del*



In order to begin to study the uprising of a new kind of anti-Semitism after the legal emancipation of the European Jews, the first step is to overcome the divisions established by historians among the “ideological families” of the XIXth century (liberalism, nationalism, socialism and so on), because I believe that under the surface of the various political languages there was a question common to all of them: the research of a new order to ensure the permanence of moral connections and institutions able to “keep together” the different parts of society¹⁰.

The difference among them did not lie in their political ideology but in their support or refusal of universal rights and modern liberties¹¹.

For this reason, I suggest reconsidering a concept, the concept of “ideological polarization”, one of the most relevant and vital heritages of his extraordinary scholarly work.

III. Jacob Talmon defined it as a dichotomy as well as a syncretism between national mythologies and the increasing power of the national State – on the one hand – and – on the other – the “vision of revolution” (that is: political universalism, equal rights, social justice, together with the technological, scientific and economic progress).

Talmon developed this idea in his masterpiece, *Myth of the Nation and Vision of Revolution* (1981): according to me, the enlightening part IV, entitled *The Jewish Dimension*, can be appreciated as its authentic sub-text of great hermeneutic value¹². I will try to develop some of its less obvious implications, starting from the definition of anti-Semitism.

“Socialism of fools” was an ironical and polemical definition of anti-Semitism that appeared at the end of the XIXth century in the German

mondo, Milano, Bruno Mondadori, 2004, p. 15 ff.

10. K. Polanyi, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

11. See É. Halévy, *L'ère de tyrannies*, Paris, Gallimard, 1938, p. 215 ff. (on which: M. Battini, *Utopia e tirannide. Scavi nell'archivio Halévy*, Torino, Bollati Boringhieri, 2011).

12. J. Talmon, *Myth of the Nation and Vision of Revolution*, New Brunswick, Transaction Publishers (first edition: University of California Press, 1981), 1992 (2), with a new introduction by I.L. Horowitz, pp. 169-233. See also: Y. Arieli, *Jacob Talmon. An Intellectual Portrait*, in *Totalitarian Democracy and after, International Colloquium in Memory of Jacob Talmon, Jerusalem 21-24 June 1982*, The Israeli Academy of Sciences of Humanities, The Hebrew University The Magnes Press, 1984, pp. 1-34.

speaking countries of central Europe. It has always been attributed to August Bebel, one of the most famous leaders of European socialism since the age of the IInd International. In German: “der Sozialismus des Kummens Kerls” (fool, singular form).

Bebel proposed it in 1894, in an interview given to the journalist Hermann Bahr, from Berlin, but strangely he had not used it the year before (1893), in the report on anti-Semitism he presented at the congress of the German social democratic party: *Sozialdemokratie und Antisemitismus*. A similar formula “Betrug am kummens Kerls” (a trap for the fool) appeared in the same year in the “Neue Zeit”, the magazine of the German Social-democratic Party (SPD), in an article written by Eduard Bernstein: *Das Schlagwort und der Antisemitismus* (the password of Anti-Semitism).

Neither Bebel nor Bernstein invented the two definitions that probably circulated in the press of the IInd Reich and of the Habsburg Empire.

For instance, Ferdinand Kronevetter, a deputy from Wien, used the formula “socialism of fools” on October 31st 1890, in the article *Die liberale und das Allgemeine Wahlrecht* (electoral right and universal suffrage) in the Viennese «Arbeiter Zeitung»¹³.

Kronewetter described as socialism of fools the nationalist economic and social policy advocated by the Social Christian Party led by Karl Lueger (one of the political masters of Adolf Hitler). At the end of the XIXth century the definition was extended from the Social Christians to French nationalists and to the Austrian anti-Semitic populists of *Verein der Deutschen Volkspartei*. Therefore, “Socialism of Fools” was an offensive definition in the political language of the XIXth century. In my analysis I propose it

13. For August Bebel’s interview to Hermann Bahr, see H. Bahr, *Der Antisemitismus. Eines Internationales Interview* (Berlin 1894), reprinted by H. Greire, Taunus, Königstein, 1979, p. 24 ff.

Bebel’s report at the congress of SPD in 1893 was edited by M. Massara, *Il marxismo e la questione ebraica*, Milano, edizioni del Calendario, 1962, p. 262 ff. Bebel’s probable source (F. Kronewetter, *Die Liberale und das Allgemeine Wahlrecht*, in «Arbeiter Zeitung», 31st October 1890) is mentioned by R. Wistrich in *Socialism and Antisemitism in Austria before 1914*, in «Jewish Social Studies», nn. 3-4, 1975, p. 327. Finally, see E. Silberner, *Sozialisten zu Juden Frage. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Sozialismus von Anfang des 19th Jahrhunderts bis 1914*, Berlin, Colloquium Verlag, 1962, p. 262 ff.; P. Pulzen, *The Rise of Political Antisemitism in Germany and Austria*, Cambridge (Mass.), Harvard University Press, 1988; M. Kessler, *Antisemitismus Zionismus und Sozialismus*, Maine, Decaton, 1993.



with a different meaning, as an aphorism rich in suggestions or rather as a “formula”¹⁴: “socialism of fools” does not simply mean to me the anti-Semitism of the socialists, but a much broader anti-Jewish anticapitalism, the consequence of the tensions between the need for social cohesion on the one hand, and free market economy on the other: that is a modern reaction being born in the heart of economic and political modernity.

This did not mean for Talmon – and does not even mean for me – to wipe anti-Semitism in the east of Europe and the existing discriminations of the Russian Jews in the imperial State¹⁵. But anti-Semitism as a solid social phenomenon and especially as a well organized political movement became quite important, in the second half of XIXth century, mainly in the western States, where legal emancipation and citizenship rights had already been conquered for long time: since 1791 in France, since 1848 under the monarchy in Piedmont and in Tuscany, since 1860 in the Italian kingdom, in 1869 in Prussia and in 1867 in the Habsburg Empire.

So, I define anti-Jewish anticapitalism as a *modern* phenomenon.

IV. According to me, “Socialism of Fools” is a formula which does not hint mainly at the existence of socialists, who were anti-Semitic: the social hatred against the Jews was felt only by a minority inside European Socialism, while the parties of the IInd International definitely sided with citizenship rights and emancipation¹⁶. On the contrary, it was the epiphenomenon of a more complex and disquieting process: the subordination of a large part of society (and also of a part of the labour and socialist movement in Europe) to Christian tradition and to the representatives of the ancient political regime, who were inclined, in the XIXth century, to express a reaction against the commercial and financial bourgeoisie.

14. C. Ginzburg, *Paura reverenza terrore. Cinque saggi di iconografia politica*, Milano, Adelphi, 2015, p. 18.

15. See P. Vidal-Naquet, *Prisme juif et prisme marxiste*, Préface à E. Traverso, *Les marxistes et la question juive*, Paris, Éditions Kimé, 1997, pp. 9-21. Traverso states that one of the few Marxist intellectuals that succeeded in combining in his analysis all the various dimensions – social, national, political and religious – of the Jewish condition, was Vladimir Medem, leader of the Jewish workers’ General Union in Lithuania, Poland and Russia (the Bund). See Medem, *The Life and Soul of a Legendary Jewish Socialist*, New York, Kitav, 1979.

16. J. Talmon, *The Myth of the Nation*, cit., p. 150.

It was the Catholic Church that first of all in 1789 declared its firm refusal of liberal economy and of the constitutional State: a refusal once again confirmed officially in 1864 (by the *Syllabus*) and in 1870 (by the Encyclical *Quanta Cura*, Vatican Council I). The European Catholic reviews and newspapers themselves («Civiltà cattolica», «La Croix», «Historisch-Politische Blätter») launched many press campaigns against the Jews, accusing them of the bankruptcy of the Paris Catholic bank, Union Générale, of the collapse of the Stock Exchanges in Berlin and in Wien in the 1870's and of the financial crisis.

At the end of the century, in the Habsburg capital, the apostolic Nuncio Monsignor Antonio Agliardi pleaded the cause of Karl Lueger's social Christian anti-Semitic party in front of the Pope, while cardinal Serafino Vannutelli wrote that in Wien the Jews dominated all institutions: parliament, town council, newspapers, banks, etc. So, thanks to the Church's support, Karl Lueger was elected burgomaster in the Habsburg capital: he was the first anti-Semitic leader to get in power in Europe, in 1895, by widespread popular consent¹⁷.

But the attitude of the Catholic Church or of other Protestant churches, like the Lutheran preacher Stöcker, does not explain other cases, in which socialist associations or trade unions were really involved. For instance, it does not explain why in Italy, in the countryside around Mantova, where the first socialist leagues were born, the newspaper «La Scintilla» accused the city bankers of being “Jewish usurers” guilty of farmers' indebtedness: its newspaper editor, Luigi Colli (a veteran of Garibaldi's campaign), published a pamphlet entitled *Gli usurai alla conquista del mondo*, which was an evident cast of the more famous text written by Osman Bey (pseudonym of Frederick Millinger, a professional of anti-Semitism).

Some decades before, during the Italian Risorgimento and in the 1848

17. Cardinal Vannutelli's article is largely quoted in E. Greipl, *Römische Kurie und Katholische Partei. Die Auseinandersetzung und die Christlichsozialismus in Österreich im Jahre 1895*, in «Quellen und Forschungen aus Italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken», LXIV, 1984, pp. 284-343. For Italian and French events see P. Sorlin, “*La Croix*” et les juifs 1880-1829. *Contribution à l'étude de l'antisemitisme contemporain*, Paris, Grasset, 1963, p. 38 ff.; G. Martina, *La “Civiltà Cattolica” e la questione ebraica*, in «La Civiltà Cattolica», 2000, vol. II, pp. 263-268; G. Miccoli, *Tra mito della cristianità e secolarizzazione. Studi sul rapporto Chiesa-società nell'età contemporanea*, Casale Monferrato, Marietti, 1985, pp. 21-111.



revolutions in Europe, there had been symptoms of hostility against the Jews: in Mantova by Ippolito Nievo; in revolutionary Jewish Leghorn by the democratic leader Francesco Domenico Guerrazzi; in Wien, where the *Gesellschaft der Volks* and the *Demokratischer Verein* – artisans, craftsmen and workers' associations – accused the Jews of plotting in order to introduce the *factory system*, and defended the ancient regime corporative communities¹⁸. So, it is necessary to look for other tracks for understanding the phenomenon of the “socialism of fools”.

V. Zeev Sternhell has suggested investigating the French origins of European fascisms: in particular, the populist revolutionary anti-parliamentary and corporative Right, supporting the so-called “socialism of the whole nation”¹⁹.

As Sternhell explains, this first anti-democratic and modern conspiracy exploited anti-Semitism as political revenue: the novelist Maurice Barrés's political and literary language is well known, as well as journalist Edouard Drumont's most famous anti-Semitic book, *La France Juive*, published in 1886. As a Catholic, Drumont impudently plagiarized the works of other previous Catholic authors, like Nicolas Des Champs or Gougenot de Mousseaux, but he also recognized that the French socialists, Fourier, Cabet, Pecquer and Leroux, had been really the first to denounce «the great Jewish invasion of the Stock Exchange»²⁰.

But in fact, Catholic Drumont had been preceded in 1883 by a socialist, Auguste Chirac, the author of a monumental work, *Les Rois de la République. Histoire des juiveries*, which had given him the opportunity to write in «Revue Socialiste», the most important journal of the workers' socialist

18. See my *Socialism of Fools. Capitalism and Modern Anti-Semitism*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2016.

19. Z. Sternhell, *La droite révolutionnaire 1885-1914. Les origines française du fascisme*, Paris, Seuil, 1938, pp. 33-76. Sternhell has recently reflected on his own intellectual relation with Jacob Talmon in the interview with Nicolas Weill: Z. Sternhell, *Histoire et Lumières. Changer le monde par la raison. Entretiens avec Nicolas Weill*, Paris, Albin Michel, 2014, p. 122 ff.

20. See G. Lelarge's interview, *Une visite à M. Drumont*, in «L'Evenement», 22 avril 1886 (see G. Kaufmann, *Edouard Drumont*, Paris, Perrin, 2008, p. 151); see also E. Drumont, *La France juive*, Paris, Marpon et Flammarion, 1886.

movement in France²¹. Its editor was Benoit Malon, who also dedicated a long review of Drumont's book, thus legitimizing anti-Semitism as social policy that could be useful to the workers' socialist movement in order to conquer low-middle class people, traders and artisans to anticapitalism²².

In 1891 Chirac dared to propose an anti-Semitic motion directly at the congress of the IInd International in Bruxelles.

On the catholic side, Drumont went so far as to define the false document, fabricated in order to confirm the accusation to captain Dreyfus, as a synthesis of authentic passages²³. According to Drumont the document was apocryphal, *not* meaning "false", but rather meaning "secret text": this was exactly the same meaning as the one anti-Semitic priests, Jouin and Benigni, would give to *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (Benigni and Jouin themselves translated the *Protocols* into Italian and French)²⁴. The years between 1876 and 1895 were the ones of a great economic depression in Europe, and Anti-Semitism became the flag of a presumed social and anti-financial policy, too.

21. A. Chirac, *Les Rois de la République. Histoire des juiveries*, in «Revue Socialiste», II, September 1885 (taken from *Les Rois de la république*, 2 voll., Paris, 1883), p. 53 ff. Chirac dealt with this topic again in *L'agiotage de 1870 à 1884*, in «La Revue Socialiste», IV, 1886, p. 605. Malon commented Chirac's texts in the article *Les morales religieuses*, in «La Revue Socialiste», III, janvier-juin 1886, pp. 1-17. See also S. Wilson, *Socialist Anti-Semitism: A Kind of Socialism*, in Id., *Ideology and Experience. Anti-Semitism in France at the time of the Dreyfus Affair*, Rutheford, Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1982, p. 334 ff., and N.L. Green, *Socialist Antisemitism. Defence of the Bougeois Jew and Discovery of the Jewish Proletariat*, in «International Review of Social History», XXX, 1985, n. 1, pp. 374-400 ff. See also E. Silberner, *Pierre Leroux's Ideas on Jewish People*, in «Jewish Social Studies», VIII, 1946, and IX, 1947, p. 337 ff.

22. B. Malon, *La question juive*, in «La Revue Socialiste», n. 18, juin 1886, p. 509.

23. E. Drumont, *La fin d'un soldat*, in «La Libre Parole», 3rd-9th September 1898. See G. Kaufmann, *Edouard Drumont*, Paris, Perrin, 208, p. 374.

24. Ms Benigni, *I documenti della conquista ebraica del mondo*. First Part: *I Protocolli dei saggi anziani di Sion*, in «Fede e Ragione», nn. 13-21, e nn. 23-26, 1921, and E. Jouin, *Le péril judeo-maçonnique*, 4 vols., Paris, Émile Paul, 1920-22. See also N. Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide. The Myth of the Jewish World Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, London, Eyre and Spottisworde, 1967, pp. 58-60. See also P.A. Taguieff (ed.), *Les Protocoles des Sages de Sion*, Paris, Berg International, 1992, 2 voll., pp. 9-37. I refer to M. Bounan, *L'État retors, Introduction à M. Joly, Dialogue aux enfers entre Machiavel et Montesquieu*, Paris, Allia, 1991, pp. XVII-XVIII (on which C. Ginzburg, *Il filo e le tracce. Vero, falso, finto*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 2006, p. 202). See also H. Speier, *La vérité aux enfers. Maurice Joly et le despotisme moderne*, in «Commentaire», LUI, 1991-92, pp. 671-90.



VI. As we have seen, Drumont defined the Jews as *Rois*, while Chirac called *Juiveries* the illegal practices invented, according to him, by the Jews: any financial speculation, bank interest or “parasitical” profit, even though not taken by the Jews. But the ancient model of *juiverie* was usury, which was a Jewish practice. In 1886, immediately after the publication of the works by Chirac and Drumont, the book, written forty years before by Alphonse Toussenel, came back in fashion among the anti-Semitic fin de siècle literature and his work *Les Juifs. Rois de l'époque*, published in 1845, was subtitled *Histoire de la féodalité financière*²⁵.

The formula “juiverie” came from Toussenel’s book, edited in 1845 (and reprinted in 1886, as suggested by Drumont and Chirac): *Les juifs rois de l'époque. Histoire de la féodalité financière*: the “financial feudality” under the monarchy and the liberal government led by the Protestant Prime Minister Guizot seemed to Alphonse Toussenel to consist of the élite of Protestant bankers. But Toussenel immediately added that: «behind the Protestants you always find the Jewish power»²⁶.

In his opinion the Jews had grabbed the aristocrats’ lands and “biens de l’Église” (Church’s real estates and properties), thanks to the Enlightenment *philosophes’* propaganda, and also his mentor Fourier had already written in his *Théorie des Quatres Mouvements* (1808) that the deep cause of every social disease was Jewish emancipation: «The Enlightenment philosophers’ most ominous and fatal work was Jewish emancipation»²⁷.

Toussenel was even more direct: the Jews are the enemies of workers because they are inevitably parasites, merchants and bankers. «The English, the Dutch, the Genevans – that is the calvinists – who learn to read

25. A. Toussenel, *Les Juifs, rois de l'époque. Histoire de la féodalité financière*, Paris, Librairie Phalansterienne, 1845 (but I quote from the second edition, Davin, Nantes 1846). The 1886 edition is *Les Juifs, rois de l'époque. Histoire de la féodalité financière, IIIème édition precedée d'une Preface, d'une notice biographique sur l'auteur et accompagné des notes hors texte de l'éditeur Gabriel de Gonet*, Paris, Marpon et Flammarion, 1886. See I. Tieder, *Alphonse Toussenel et l'antisémitisme fourieriste*, in «Tsafon», n. 18, 1994, pp. 42 ff., and R.S. Wistrich, *Radical Antisemitism in France and in Germany 1840-1880*, in «Modern Judaism», n. 15, 1995, pp. 109-135.

26. A. Toussenel, *Les Juifs, rois de l'époque*, ed. Davin 1846, cit., p. XXXII.

27. *Théorie de quatre mouvements*, in *Publication des manuscrits de Charles Fourier*, Paris, Dentu, 1851-58, vol. 3, p. 35. See P. Benichou, *Sur quelques sources françaises de l'antisémitisme moderne*, in «Commentaire», n. 1, 1978, pp. 67-79.

God's Will in the same Book as the Jews do, show the same contempt as the Jews do of the laws of social equality and the Right to Labour». And immediately after that, he stated: «I am giving the reader this advice: the word Jew must be understood in its popular meaning: as a Jew, a banker, any kind of trader», the one who claims «that God granted his servants and the followers of his law the monopoly of the world's exploitation»²⁸.

In 1843 the liberal monarchy permitted the expansion of Jewish finance and, putting forward as justification the lack of capitals for building up the railway network in northern France, allowed the management of the railway to the Rotschildt Bank, in exchange for an advance of the necessary capital. The management – according to Toussenel – would certainly favour the Rotschildt group's expansion, up to the control of the system of communication, that is of the national market and of the military defence of the State²⁹.

We can affirm that in Toussenel's text the idea of the Jewish plot was already present. He also the plan of a national socialist economy, grounded on the confiscation and the socialization of Jews' properties, on the abolition of bank interest and on a new segregation of the Jewish population³⁰. The socialist nationalist and racist deputy Georges Vacher de Lapouge would simply propose it again in the Dreyfus affair, thirty-five years before the Nuremberg's Laws³¹.

VII. Now I propose to draw a first conclusion: the modern anti-Semitic writers in the XIXth century did not simply repeat the traditional Christian dispute over usury (the “filthy lucre”), fitting it against Jewish bankers' “pioneering role” in building up modern economy.

Anti-Semites attacked «the financial linkage of Europe's governments and economies with Jewish banking, which was paralleled by Jewish en-

28. A. Toussenel, *Les Juifs*, cit, p. XXVIII. I have found observations agreeing with mine in Moshe Shlukovsky, *America, a judia*, in «NIEJ. Nucleo interdisciplinar de Estudos Judaicos», Universidad Federal de Rio de Janeiro, 2014, n. 81, pp. 15-21.

29. *Ibidem*, p. 4.

30. *Ibidem*, pp. 145-178. See A. Toussenel, *L'esprit des bêtes, le monde des oiseaux. Ornithologie passionnelle*, Librairie Phalansterienne, 1853, vol. 3, pp. 87-240.

31. G. Vacher de Lapouge, *Les sélections sociales. Cours libre de science politique professé à l'Université de Montpellier*, Paris, Marpon et Flammarion, 1886, p. 468.



terprise in railway building: the Rotschildts, Pereiras and Fould in France, the Rotschildts again in Austria, Bleichröder in Germany and Rumania, Baron Hirsch in the Balkans and Turkey, the barons Ginsburg and Poliakov in Russia. And Reuter, Havas and Wolff, who pioneered the great new press agencies, too»³².

The crisis of the self-regulating market was crucial for the development of anti-Jewish anticapitalism, in the case of the general depression in the years 1879-1896 (which was quite important for the success of Lueger's, Schönenerer's, Barrès's and Drumont's movements); but also before, in 1845-48, when the explosion of a financial crisis endangered the government plan of railway building, founded on the granting to the Rotschildt Bank.

Harsh tones were also used by Pierre Leroux, a former Saint-Simonian socialist, who wrote a text with the same title as Toussenel's one, *Les Juifs Rois de l'époque*, by the republican Ledru Rollin, and mainly by Pierre Joseph Proudhon, who identified the cause of the economic crisis in "a fully negative behaviour, a fully usury behaviour, a fully Jewish one". Proudhon's *Carnets* written in reaction to Jewish Karl Marx's criticism to his book *Philosophie de la Misère*, went so far as to propose the expulsion of Jews from France³³.

Misère de la Philosophie. Reponse à la Philosophie de la Misère de Monsieur Proudhon, published in 1847, in the middle of the economic crisis, was, in fact, one of Marx's most ferocious critical remarks against the socialism of his own time: according to Marx, Proudhon's thought belonged to what Marx defined in his *Manifesto* as reactionary and feudal Christian socialism, of crucial importance in order to understand anti-Jewish anti-capitalism, too. In fact, Marx wrote:

«As Mr Proudhon feels such a tender interest in Providence, we suggest he should have a look at *Histoire de l'économie politique* by Villeneuve

32. J. Talmon, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

33. See P.J. Proudhon, *Césarisme et christianisme (de l'an 45 avant J. C. à l'an 476 après)*, précédé d'une préface par J.A. Langlois, Paris, Marpon et Flammarion, 1883, vol. I, p. 133. On the anti-Jewish pages of *Les confessions d'un révolutionnaire* (1849) see D. Halévy, *La vie de Proudhon*, Paris, Stock, 1918. The note about the Jews' expulsion is in *Carnets de P.J. Proudhon. Texte inédit et integral établi sur le manuscrits autographes, avec annotations et appareil critique de Pierre Hautmann*, Librairies Marcel Rivière, 1961, vol. II, 1847-48, pp. 337-338.

Bargemont, who pursues the aims of Providence, too. This aim is no more equality, but Catholicism»³⁴. Villeneuve belonged to the school of Christian social economists (Lamennais, De Gerando, Ozanam), who advocated the legislative control of the market, and together with socialist Toussenel and Proudhon all invoked Providence and referred to the authority of the greatest anti-Protestant Catholic controversialist in the XVIIIth century, Jacques Benigne Bossuet³⁵. So, we can conclude that Filmer's, Ramsays' and Bossuet's vision of Christian society and of mercantilistic economy were the models for *Théorie du pouvoir politique et religieux*, published in 1796 by Louis de Bonald, the emigrant viscount and close comrade to Joseph de Maistre, who wrote many pamphlets of social corporative and antiliberal economy, received by the socialist thinkers too, such as *Sur l'économie politique* (1810), *Sur l'argent et le prêt à intérêt* (1816), *De la famille agricole* (1826). Socialist anti-Semites and Catholic anti-Jewish anticapitalism shared a common cultural code.

VIII. Beside a kind of democratic socialism deriving from the Enlightenment political philosophy, another socialist family lived in the XIXth century the ideological family that identified socialism with corporative society and a kind of economy controlled or owned by the State institutions³⁶, but also socialists who could be named as reactionary and neo-feudal socialists, according to Karl Marx's *Manifesto*.

But what is more important, the question of the historical existence of this kind of reactionary and neo-feudal socialism makes us re-

34. K. Marx, *Werke*, Berlin - DDR 1961, I, 1, VI, pp. 187-188. See also E. Cantimori Mezzomonti, introduction to K. Marx, *Manifesto del partito comunista*, Torino, Einaudi, 1962, p. II.

35. J.B. Bossuet, *Politique tirée des propres paroles de l'Écriture Sainte. À Monseigneur le Dauphin. Ouvrage posthume de Messire Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet*, à Paris par Pierre Cot, 1803 (see Lib. II, art I, prop. III and VII, p. 69). See A. Rebelliau, *Bossuet*, Paris, Hachette, 1900, p. 97, and also G. Lanson, *Bossuet. Extraits des Oeuvres Diverses, avec des notices et des notes. Texte revu sur les manuscrits et sur les éditions originales*, Paris, Société française d'imprimerie, 1899, p. 183. Bossuet's theses were very close to Filmer's and Ramsay's ones: I refer to *Patriarcha, or the Natural Power of Kings*, by the learned Sir Robert Filmer, R. Chiswell, London 1680 (2nd ed. London 1685). See also A.M. Ramsay, *Essai philosophique sur le gouvernement civil*, ch. IV, in *Oeuvres complètes de Fénelon*, Paris, Didot, 1852, t. III, p. 337 ff.

36. É. Halévy, *La doctrine économique de Saint Simon et des saintsimoniens*, in «La Revue de Mois», I, 1908 (then in *L'ère des tyrannies*, Paris, Gallimard, 1938, p. 13 ff.).



consider the nature of Karl Marx's position on Hebraism: only four years before the *Manifesto*, Marx edited the essay *Zur Judenfrage* in the «Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher», that was followed by *Die Heilige Familie* only after a few months.

These two texts certainly show, though through a pedantic academic language, that Marx agreed on the radical criticism (of the Enlightenment origin) of every revealed religion, as Judaism and, in strict relationship, Christianity, and that Marx clearly sided with “equal rights for European Jews” in the framework of bourgeois society and of the constitutional State. For this reason, in the first part of *Zur Judenfrage*, he criticized Bruno Bauer, who had subordinated the Jews' political inclusion and the equality of rights to the giving up of their particularistic identity as a separate religious community. In such a way Bauer identified universality with Christian tradition, and therefore, he accepted equality only as a consequence of the Jews' conversion, exactly as Christian theologians had affirmed for centuries.

On the contrary, Marx stated the equality of rights at once and without any conditions (even if in the second part of *Zur Judenfrage* he proposed the thesis of the identification of Judaism with commercial business). Marx wrote about “the real, secular (*weltlichen*) Jew”, who tries to pursue his own “self-interest”: so, just “self-interest” results to be “the secular foundation of Judaism”, a religion in which the “Secular God” is only “the Money”³⁷. (The attack to Judaism as a religion of “self-interest” was inspired to Marx by the reading of the manuscript *Über das Geldwesen* that communist and sionist Moses Hess would print after a little time)³⁸.

37. K. Marx, F. Engels, *Werke*, I, pp. 346-377 and 378-390, and *Werke*, II, pp. 91-95, 99-104, 112-115. See S. Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1968, pp. 52-65.

38. K. Marx, *Werke*, cit., VI, p. 25 and M. Hess, *Philosophische und Sozialistische Schriften 1837-1850*, Berlin, Cornu-Mönke, 1961, pp. 329-347. Thanks to S. Avineri for letting me read his unpublished text *Karl Marx's Jewish Question(s)*.

IX. I propose to consider *Sur les juifs* as the starting point of reactionary anti-Jewish “socialism”: this text, published by Viscount de Bonald in 1806, was an extraordinarily violent attack to the decrees on Jewish emancipation, issued in 1791 by the Constituent Assembly. De Bonald thought the Assembly was guilty of contrasting religion and tradition, and depicted the Jews as financial and usury speculators calling them for the first time a “new feudality”, exactly with the same formula as they will be called later on in Toussenel’s and Drumont’s writings.

De Bonald can offer a valid perspective for a general interpretation of the anti-Jewish anticapitalist literature. «We have seen the revolutionary legislators giving their full protection to the Jews; while abolishing the nobles’ feudality (which really no longer existed in 1789), they favoured the Jews, this new feudality made of true and powerful masters in Alsace and in France, where now they enjoy the title and all the old nobles’ privileges. If *feudal* is a synonym of hateful oppression in the Enlightenment philosophy, I do not know anything more feudal than millions of mortgages due to usurious Jews».

De Bonald passed from a tirade against Gottfried Lessing and Mendelsshon to the attack to the Protestant writer Christian Dohm, and finally to Mirabeu. But the real target of the polemic was obviously abbot Grégoire, who had supported the thesis that granting equal rights could have allowed the physical and moral regeneration of “greedy Jewish people”. So, anti-Jewish anticapitalism, first elaborated by de Bonald, was the conclusion of the struggle fought against the Enlightenment idea of “regeneration” (*régénération*) or the “improvement” (*verbesserung*) of the moral customs of the Jews: all the protagonists of the emancipation of 1791 – Honoré de Mirabeau, Clermont-Tonnerre, Henry Grégoire, Malesherbes – had been really influenced by the German *Aufklärung* and the *Haskalah*.

Enlightenment idea was based on the acknowledgement of the existence of a common foundation to all religions³⁹: Lessing’s opinions had an

39. See L. de Bonald, *Sur les juifs* (Février 1806), in *Mélanges littéraires, politiques et philosophiques*, Bruxelles, Editions de la société nationale pour la propagation du bon livre, 1846, p. 429. See A. Funkestein, *The Political Theory of Jewish Emancipation from Mendelsshon to Herzl*, in *Deutsche Aufklärung und Judenemanzipation*, W. Grab (ed.), Tel Aviv, Tel Aviv University Press, 1980, pp. 13-28, (and D. Sorkin, *Emancipation, Haskalah, and Reform: The Contribution*



enormous influence on the German *Aufklärung* and on the French Enlightenment, but Johan David Michaelis. On the contrary, the greatest Old Testament scholar, answered that among the Jews there could not definitely be «an even generic form of honesty, all the more so because almost all people have to live by commerce, a trade that offers, compared to others, greater opportunities and temptations for deceit»⁴⁰. This thesis was also held by the convert from Judaism Johan Eisenmenger⁴¹.

The pamphlet that started the debate in the German States (above all in Prussia) about Jewish emancipation was triggered by the polemics against “usury”, and Jewish practices of money lending. In 1780 the Protestant writer Christian Wilhelm Dohm replied together with Mendelsshon defending the Alsatian Jews, threatened by Joseph de Hell⁴², and proposing the abolition of all the legal restrictions that prevented the Jews from having access to productive agricultural and industrial activities and State administration⁴³: the national character of the Jews should be considered only as the result of their sufferings⁴⁴. Dohm’s proposals provoked hard reactions⁴⁵.

But it was only *after* the turning point of the French Revolution that a new anti-Jewish anticapitalism expressed the need to distinguish the Jews

of Amos Funkestein, in «Jewish Social Studies», 6, 1999, pp. 98-110).

40. J.D. Michaelis, review of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Die Juden*, in *Göttingsche Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen*, 1754, pp. 620-622, 1, pp. 292-96. The bibliography concerning Lessing’s contribution to the Jewish question is vast: see H. Detering, *Christian Wilhem von Dohm und die idee der Toleranz*, in *Lessing und die Toleranz*, P. Freimark, F. Kopitzsch, H. Slessarev (eds.), Munich, Text + Kritik, 1985, pp. 174-185 (regarding Lessing’s link with Dohm’s work).

41. Regarding Eisenmenger’s work, see J. Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism, 1700-1933*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1980, pp. 13-22.

42. F.J. de Hell, *Observations d’un Alsacien sur l’affaire présente des Juifs d’Alsace*, Frankfurt, 1779.

43. C.W. Dohm, *Probe einer Kurzen Charakteristik einiger der berühmtesten Völker Asiens. I: Die Hebräer*, in «Lippische Intelligenzblätter», 41, October 8, 1774, coll. 649-654.

44. C.W. Dohm, *Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung*, Berlin, Nicolai, 1781, p. 109. (See I. Dambacher, *Christian Wilhem Dohm. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der preussisch aufgeklärten Beamtentums und seiner Reformbestrebungen am Ausgabe des 18 Jahrhunderts*, Frankfurt, Peter Lang, 1974, pp. 164-203).

45. See F. Hatmann, *Untersuchung ob die bürgerliche Freiheit den Juden zu gestatten sie*, Berlin, Hesses, 1783, pp. 12-17.

as a different *social* body: the Jews' emancipation was a total mistake because – willy-nilly – they were not capable of true assimilation⁴⁶, and the protagonists of the legal battle for emancipation – Honoré de Mirabeau, Clermont-Tonnerre, Grégoire and Malesherbes – were strongly affected by the echoes of the debate beyond the Rhine⁴⁷.

In 1787 Honoré de Mirabeau had published his study *Sur Mendelsshon et la réforme politique des juifs*⁴⁸; Lessing's and Dohm's texts had been used by Grégoire in the work that gave impetus to the political action that led to emancipation: *Essai sur la régénération physique, morale et politique des juifs*, with which the abbot won the prize in the competition organized in 1788 by the Académie Royale des sciences et des Arts of the city of Metz⁴⁹. But Grégoire's text also revealed all the contradictions of the Enlightenment policy: the *chrétiens éclairés* shared the conviction that the social and

46. Funkestein, *The Political Theory of Jewish Emancipation*, p. 26.

47. C.G. de Malesherbes, *Second mémoire sur le mariage des Protestants*, London, 1787. See also *Catalogue des Livres de la Bibliothèque de feu Chrétien-Guillaume Lamognon des Malesherbes*, Paris, 1797. Malesherbes collected a lot of material about Jewish emancipation in preparation of the new law, but its text has been lost. See *Essai sur la régénération physique, morale et politique des juifs*, by Grégoire, republished in the series *La Révolution française et l'emancipation des juifs*, vol. 3, Paris, Éditions des Histoires Sociales, 1968; regarding Malesherbes and Grégoire, see M. Ginsburger, *Zwei Unveröffentlichte Briefe des Abbé Grégoire*, in *Festschrift zu Simon Dubnows siebzigstem, Geburtstag*, Berlin, Jüdischer Verlag, 1930, 201 ff.; Z. Szajkowski, *The Jewish Problem in Alsace, Metz, and Lorraine on the Eve of the Revolution of 1789*, in «Jewish Quarterly Review», 44, 1954, pp. 231-33; and A.E. Halphen, *Recueil de lois, decrets, ordonnances, avis du Conseil d'État, arrêtés et règlements concernant les Israélites depuis la Révolution de 1789*, Paris, Wittersheim, 1851, pp. 183-94.

48. D. Menozzi, *Philosophes et chrétiens éclairés. Politica e religione nella collaborazione di G. H. Mirabeau e A. A. Lamourette 1774-1794*, Brescia, Paideia, 1976, p. 64.

49. E. Tortarolo, *Ebraismo e Illuminismo tedesco*, in *La questione ebraica dall'Illuminismo all'Impero 1780-1815*, P. Alatri, S. Grassi (eds.), Naples, Esi, 1994, pp. 125-40. Regarding the diffusion of Mendelsshon's work, see P.H. Meyer, *Le rayonnement de Moses Mendelssohn hors d'Allemagne*, in «Dix-huitième siècle», 13, 1981, pp. 63-78; and J.I. Helfand, *The symbiotic Relationship Between French and German Jewry in the Age of Emancipation*, in «Leo Baeck Institute Year Book», 29, 1984, pp. 331-50. See also S. Schwarzfuchs, *La Haskalah et le cercle de Metz à la veille de la Révolution*, in *Politique et religion dans le Judaïsme moderne*, D. Tollet (ed.), Paris, Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1987, pp. 51-59. Regarding the mediation of Mirabeau and Brissot, see L. Loft, *Mirabeau and Brissot's Review Christian Wilhelm von Dohm and the Jewish Question*, in «History of European Ideas», 13, 1991, pp. 605-22; L. Loft, *J. P. Brissot and the Problem of Jewish Emancipation*, in «Studies on Voltaire», 278, 1990, pp. 465-475. Finally, see F.M. Pepe, *Il mondo nuovo di Brissot. Libertà e istituzioni tra antico regime e rivoluzione*, Torino, Einaudi, 1996, p. 146 ff.



political improvement (*verbesserung*) of the customs of the Jews would be the result of the new *droit de cité* for the Jews. The legal conditions would have produced their *régénération morale*, permitting them to be assimilated into Christian society⁵⁰.

This political reform certainly envisaged emancipation but also new restrictions concerning commerce, because commerce, which «tends to eliminate national characters and homologate them [and] has left almost intact the national character of the Jewish people...; this kind of work, commerce, since it makes possible the circulation of money, gives the Jews the chance to practise usury and alter the value of money, [...] a new means to conspire with concealed maneuvers and exercise mendacious practices, thus expanding more and more their malignant influence».

Grégoire admitted that the proliferation of usurious practices had occurred to the detriment of Christian peasants, who were reduced to a state of beggary. Therefore, it was necessary to force by law the Jews to «*faire les échanges à prix comptant*» as well as «to prohibit them to do those kinds of job, as for instance administering hotels..., that facilitate dangerous manipulations... We should expel them from functions such tax collectors, sheriffs' tax, cashers, customs officials, procurators and other functions that make it easier to practice concussion, ill-gotten gains, smuggling. This is because we should never forget the character of the people we want to correct»⁵¹. This sentence is an evidence that the *philosophe chrétien* Grégoire shared the traditional negative opinion about "Jewish commerce" expressed by Francois Joseph de Hell and by Louis de Bonald⁵².

50. The texts of the other two winners were also published: C.A. Thiéry, *Dissertation sur cette question: "Est-il des moyens de rendre les juifs plus hereux et plus utiles en France?"* (Paris, 1789), and Z. Horowitz, *Apologie des juifs, en réponse à la question: "Est-il des moyens de rendre les juifs plus hereux et plus utiles en France?"* (Paris, 1789), quoted in S. Luzzatto, *Il bacio di Grégoire. La "rigenerazione" degli ebrei nella Francia del 1789*, in «Studi Settecenteschi», 17, 1997, pp. 265-86. See also H.T. de Moremberg, *Est-il des moyens de rendre les juifs plus utiles et plus hereux? Considérations sur le concours de l'Académie Royale de Metz de 1787 et 1788*, in *Mémoires de l'Académie Royale de Metz*, 154, 1973, pp. 179-265; D. Feuerweker, *L'émancipation des juifs en France de l'ancien Régime à la fin due Second Empire*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1976, pp. 49-142, and S. Luzzatto, *Il bacio di Grégoire*, in «Studi settecenteschi», 17, 1971, pp. 265-86.

51. H. Grégoire, *Essai sur la régénération physique, morale et politique des juifs*, pp. 29, 72, 144-46.

52. See R. Hermon-Belot, *The Abbé Grégoire's Program for the Jews: Social Reform and Spi-*

The controversies spread from the new revolutionary France to the rest of Europe: in 1799, David Friedländer, one of Moses Mendelssohn's students, anonymously wrote the Lutheran pastor of Berlin, Wilhelm Abraham Teller, asking for the emancipation of the Jews, but the Swiss Catholic Jean-André De Luc immediately grasped the opportunity to attack once again the *Aufklärung* (on various occasions, also Grégoire mentioned De Luc's texts, sharing his drastic negative judgement on Friedländer's proposal)⁵³.

Between 1803 and 1806, the production of pamphlets, treatises and newspapers about the condition of European Jews had become a permanent feature of public opinion and also for the German writers the model of legal emancipation based upon the Enlightenment criteria became the central question. Consequently the economic function of the Jews in the commercial balance of imports and exports became a crucial issue⁵⁴. Friederich Buchholz, for instance, accepted the idea of the improvement of the condition of the Jews but not of their immediate legal emancipation, which on the contrary would have produced a "money despotism" [*Gelddespotismus*]⁵⁵.

ritual Project, in *The Abbé Grégoire and his World*, J.D. Popkin, R.H. Popkin (eds.), Dordrecht, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000, p. 16 ff.

53. See D. Friedländer, *Sendschreiben an Seine Hochwürden. Herrn Oberconsistorialrath und Probst Teller zu Berlin*, Berlin, Mylius, 1799, pp. 18-39. On this subject see J.M. Hess, *Germans, Jews, and the Claims of Modernity*, New Haven (Conn.), Yale University Press, 2002, pp. 169-93; I refer to J.A. De Luc, *Lettre aux auteurs juifs d'un mémoire adressé à M. Teller*, Berlin, 1799, p. 85 ff. The texts in which Grégoire mentions De Luc's text is: H. Grégoire, *Observations nouvelles sur les juifs et spécialement sur ceux d'Allemagne*, Paris, Gratiot, 1806, p. 13; Id., *Histoire de la Théophilantropie, depuis sa naissance jusqu'à son extinction*, in H. Grégoire, *Histoire des sectes religieuses*, Paris, Potey, 1810, pp. 55-171.

54. K.W.F. Grattenauer, *Wider die juden: ein Wort der Warnung an alle unsere christliche Mitbürger*, Berlin, Schmidt, 1803, p. 64. See S. Stern-Täubler, *Der literarische Kampf um die Emanzipation in der Jahren 1806-1820 und seine ideologischen und soziologischen Voraussetzungen*, in «Hebrew Union College Annual», 23, 1950-1951, pp. 171-96. Grattenauer dealt with this question once again in *Erklärung an das Publikum über meine Schrift: wieder die Juden*, Berlin, Schmidt, 1803. The book by C.L. Paalzow was entitled: *Tractatus historicus-politicus de civitate Judaeorum*, Berlin, Schone, 1803; German translation: *Ueber das Bürgerrecht der Juden*, Leipzig, Schmudt, 1804.

55. F. Buchholz, *Moses und Jesus, oder über das intellektuelle und moralische Verhältniss der Juden und Christen*, Berlin, Unger, 1803, pp. 187-201. Quite a few texts favoured a certain emancipation in the name of a new economic policy. See F.J.K. Scheppler, *Ueber die aufhebung des Judenleibzolls*, Hanau, Scharneck, 1805, p. 94 ff.; J.A. Schlettwein, *Bitte an die Grossen wegen*



X. In 1806 the prospect of the convocation of a general assembly of the representatives of the Jewish communities of the empire created the conditions for the final intransigent reaction.

Bonald's article received replies from Grégoire and a prominent Jew from Bordeaux, Moses Peixotto⁵⁶, but it had a decisive effect on Napoleon Bonaparte: so, two months later, on March 17th 1808, by two imperial decrees, the Jewish communities were reorganized and finally a third decree curtailed loans with interest, making an exception to the Civil Code and the general law on commerce. This third decree permitted the Jews to practise their profession only after having a licence from the prefect of their place of residence. Thanks to these new laws, Bonald obtained an important result: the legal necessity that the Jews, unlike any other French citizen, had to get a special authorization in order to trade, after showing that they were not involved in usury.

In 1791 the emancipation decree had stated:

«After considering the necessary conditions of citizenship for becoming electors as defined by the Constitution, and after considering that every man is enjoying this condition, having made a civic oath and having committed himself to the obligations imposed by the constitution, the National Assembly declares that these men have the right to all privileges that the constitution guarantees; so, [the National assembly] will revoke all the exceptions and the reservations included in previous norms pertaining to the Jews that have made an oath. This oath will be considered as a renunciation to all the exceptions and privileges previously held in their favour»⁵⁷.

der Juden zu verhütung trauriger Folgen in den Staaten, in «Ephemeriden der Menschheit», 4, 1776, pp. 41-44; and J. von Soden, *Die Nationalökonomie*, Leipzig, 1805, 1, pp. 220-23.

56. The references to Bonald were indeed rare. See, for example, Drogens Tama, *Geschichtliche Darstellung des Zustandes in Frankreich in den letzten Zeiten*, in *Gesammelte Actenstücke und öffentliche Verhandlungen über die Verbesserung der Juden in Frankreich*, A. Bran (ed.), Hamburg, 1807, p. 324 ff., and H. Grégoire, *Observations nouvelles sur les juifs, et spécialement sur ceux d'Amsterdam et Francfort*, in «Revue Philosophique, littéraire et politique», 15, May 21, 1807, pp. 321-29, and *ibid.*, 16, June 1, 1807, pp. 385-94.

57. The text of the edict of the National assembly is in B. Blumenkrantz, A. Soboul, *Les juifs et la Révolution Française*, Paris, Franco-Judaica, 1989, p. 10. Instead, the texts of Napoleon's

In 1808 those rights were really revoked. The Jews would have been able to practice the profession of merchants only on the basis of an authorization from the prefect and a certification (issued by the municipal administration) attesting with certainty that they were *not* involved in usury.

Anti-Jewish anticapitalism was also shared by some utopist thinkers like Louis-Sébastien Mercier: *L'an 2440, rêve s'il en fu jamais*, edited in 1770, was republished in 1786 and 1799 and depicted Paris in the far future as a city transformed by progress in science, economic conditions and city planning (in contrast with it, the book presented Versailles abandoned and in ruins, inhabited by the decrepit King Louis XIV)⁵⁸. Mercier imagined that in 2440 there would have been the wonderful triumph of the natural and rational religion of the Être Suprême, but the main obstacle to Jewish assimilation remained only commercial activity: the particular ability of the Jews in internal and international trade made them resist integration into the *fraternité nationale*, («the spirit of Christianity orders, I think, to hold all men as brothers, regardless of their government and their religions»)⁵⁹. For this reason he envisaged in 2440 the persistence of discrimination, necessary to counteract the excessive power of the Jews and even their plan to control the state: «The Jews, who submit to any monarch

edict are collected in *Organisation Civile et Religieuse des Israélites de France et du Royaume d'Italie, decretée par sa Majesté Impériale et Roi le 17 Mars 1808; suivie de la Collection des Actes de l'Assemblée des Israélites, de France et du Royaume d'Italie, convoquée à Paris en 1806; et de celle des Procès Verbaux et Décisions du Grand-Sanhérein convoqué en 1807; lesquelles ont servi de base à cette Organisation*, Paris, Treuttel et Würtz, 1808. The text of the decree of March 17th, 1808, states in articles 7 and 8, pages 13-14: «Art. 7. As for now, at the date of July 1, no Jew could practise commerce or transaction without receiving an authorization by the prefect of the department, which will be granted on precise information and a certificate, first by the Municipal Council (which certifies that this Jew has not practised usury or illegal transaction) and second by the Concistorum of the synagogue of the city of residence, which testifies to his good behaviour and honesty, Art. 8. This authorization will be renewed annually».

58. L.S. Mercier, *L'an 2440, rêve s'il ne fut jamais*, Amsterdam, Van Harrevelt, 1770. The modern editions are: L.S. Mercier, *L'an deux mille quatre cent quarante. Rêve s'il ne fut jamais*, R. Trousson (ed.), Bordeaux, Dunos, 1971; *L'an 2440. Édition de 1770 avec des extraits des chapitres nouveaux publiés en 1786*, intro. Alain Pons, Paris, Edition France, 1977; *L'an 2440, rêve s'il ne fut jamais*, édition de 1799, intro. and annot. Christophe Cave and Christine Marcandier-Colard, La Découverte, Paris, 1999. Finally, see also S. Luzzatto, *L'anno 2440, Louis-Sébastien Mercier, 1770*, in *La cultura del romanzo*, F. Moretti (ed.), Torino, Einaudi, 2001, pp. 653-58.

59. Mercier, *L'an 2440*, ed. Cave and Marcandier-Colard, book 2, p. 241.



indifferently, hold in their hands all the wealth of the nation in many states and cities»⁶⁰ (Grégoire himself wondered whether the «future will perhaps justify the negative predictions by M. Mercier») ⁶¹.

The charge of usury and of financial speculation was obviously used by aristocrats like Duke de Broglie and the clergy's opponents. Hyacinte de Gasquet (*L'usure démasquée*, 1766) and Piero Ballerini, between 1764 and 1775 opposed the liberalization of wheat markets and of the privatization of common lands (the new "agrarian individualism" as Marc Bloch defined these transformations), proposed by Enlightenment reformers, like the Minister of Finance Turgot. Following the tradition of Gasquet, Ballerini and Hell, Louis de Bonald finally declared that the Jews could not be allowed to be citizens under the Christian religion because they would end by oppressing Christians as slaves, thus establishing a "new feudality"⁶².

So, de Bonald succeeded in secularizing the traditional image of the Jew's negative and theological power, and in building up a new image of the Jewish economic and secular power, using the old feudal metaphor of Jewish usury as a "monstrous hydra" devouring the flesh of Christians, and identifying it with the financial bourgeoisie.

The Jews' non-involvement into universalistic Catholic religion was translated into the material financial and economic power in order to conspire against national society: the persistence of fraudulent money lending or trade would represent the definitive proof of the Jews' conspiracy as an easy explanation of the cyclical crises in market economy.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 203.

61. H. Grégoire, *Essai sur la régénération physique, morale et politique des juifs*, p. 54.

62. L. de Bonald, *Théorie du pouvoir politique et religieux dans la société civile, démontrée par le raisonnement et par l'histoire* (1796), in *Œuvres du Vicomte de Bonald*, Bruxelles, éditions de la Société nationale pour la propagation des bons livres, 1845, vol. I.4. Id., *De la politique et de la morale*, *ibid.*, p. 116 *passim*. On these works see H. Moulinié, *Louis de Bonald*, Paris, Alcan, 1916, pp. 81 ff. In order to better understand his political ideas see A. Koyré, *Louis de Bonald*, in Id., *études d'histoire de la pensée philosophique*, Paris, éditions des Annales ESC, 1949, p. 117.

XI. According to Stefano Levi della Torre, anti-Semitism had a very long tradition, and it had the fluctuating, but persistent, course typical of a tradition, which characterized Christian theological stances towards Judaism and Christian attitudes towards Jews⁶³. Prominent scholars, like Salo Baron, Jacob Katz, Ben Zion Dinur, Ysrael Guttman and Yehuda Bauer, have stressed the very long continuity of what Robert Wistrich defined “the longest hatred”, and in his very recent book David Nirenberg has identified the anti-Judaic tradition as one of the “basic tools” of western literary tradition: a set of concepts that helped to provide European Christian societies with meaning, giving order to history and allowing to interpret reality⁶⁴.

Since Christianity had become “*religio licita*” in the Roman Empire, Christian attitude towards Jews fluctuated⁶⁵. But from the XIIth century the nature of Jewish condition in Europe changed drastically, for economic expansion, mercantile and craft corporations, the necessities of credit: since 1150 the Jews were involved in lending activities. The stereotype of the Jewish usurer appeared because Jewish lenders were encouraged by secular authorities, who thought they could take advantage of the new lending activity⁶⁶.

In front of the spiritual authorities’ very strong condemnation, the Christians, who did not want to admit their responsibility in lending money, were interested in highlighting the Jews’ role and their great profit produced by the need of money⁶⁷.

63. See S. Levi della Torre, *Mosaico. Attualità e inattualità degli ebrei*, Torino, Rosenberg and Sellier, 1994, p. 92.

64. D. Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism. The Western Tradition*, New York, Norton and Company, 2013, p. 9.

65. J. Isaac, *Genèse de l’antisémitisme*, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1956, pp. 56-125; see A. Kaspi, *Jules Isaac, ou la passion de la vérité*, Paris, Clou, 2002. See also J. Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and Synagogue. A Study in the Origins of Anti-Semitism*, London, Soucino Press, 1934.

66. See G. Langmuir, *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-Oxford, University of California Press, 1990, pp. 10-11 (For a discussion on the stereotype: J. Shatzmiller, *Shylock Reconsidered: Jews, Moneylending and Medieval Society*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-Oxford, University of California Press, 1990).

67. Langmuir, cit., p. 306.



XII. Emancipation changed everything.

A new social vision appeared but it was expressed by the words of the old medieval polemics on usury. The resilience of words concealed a change, a fundamental historical change in their meaning. So, in order to really understand what the coming back of the polemics on usury meant in the language of the new anti-Jewish anti-capitalist literature of the XIX century, and in its use of words such as “usury” or “financial feudality”, historical analysis cannot stop at the level of the historical actors’ language⁶⁸. At the time of the self-regulating market economy words did not change, but things really did.

Destroying law emancipation became the key to demolish the new order, because the Jews had become the symbol of the new state of things: free market economy and the constitutional State founded on a contract and on the covenant. Free exchange and political liberal values were interwoven, and high finance and the international bank were at the same time identified with Jewish finance.

“Socialism of fools” became the most dramatic symptom of these social reactions against market economy. The abolition of profit as the basis of capitalist economy was not required at all: it was required only the abolition of bank interest, considered as a way of exploiting landowners, farmers and artisans by bank capitalism. As many Jews managed banks, the little bourgeoisie, ruined by crisis, thought they were crashed on the one side by Jewish bankers, and on the other proletarians, of whom many leaders were Jew⁶⁹.

This explains why, from the beginning of the XIXth century, the *traditional* argument against usury constituted the core of a new political attack on emancipation, on the constitutional State and political universalism, and finally on the “vision of Revolution”. As Hannah Arendt wrote: «What

68. M. Bloch, *Apologie pour l'histoire, ou métier d'historien*, 1946, now in *L'histoire, la guerre, la Résistance*, édition établie par A. Becker, E. Bloch, Paris, Gallimard, 2006, p. 959. Carlo Ginzburg has drawn my attention to this page by Bloch (see C. Ginzburg, *Our Words and Theirs. A Reflection on the Historian Craft, Today*, in *Historical Knowledge. In Quest of Theory, Method and Evidence*, S. Fellman, M. Rahikanen, Cambridge, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012, pp. 97-119).

69. É. Halévy, *Histoire du socialisme européenne*, Paris, Gallimard, 1948, p. 279.

is amazing is the total correlation between the representation of the nascent commercial capitalism of the banks and of the entrepreneurs, and the features of anti-Semitism. This shows that all anti-Semitic arguments were of feudal origin»⁷⁰. That was the argument of usury.

In the 1930s fascist and anti-Jewish anticapitalism had many converts in Germany, Austria and in the French Republic. In Italy, after the promulgation of “racial” laws in September 1938 (in which the Jews were defined as such according to their descent), two fundamental documents were issued: the speech given by Mussolini in Trieste on September 18th, and the *Dichiarazione della Razza* made by the Gran Consiglio on October 16th. In these new documents a social and political pattern anti-semitism clearly prevailed: Jewish Italians were declared to constitute «the chiefs of the staff of the antifascist conspiracy» and were accused of being involved in the international Jewish plot planned by «high finance and Bolshevism against the National State». Such documents proved the importance of the starting point of fascist anti-Jewish campaign, the book *Gli Ebrei in Italia*, the text commissioned by Mussolini to Paolo Orano in 1937.

Indeed, since 1910-1911 Orano’s ideology had been an original kind of anti-Jewish anticapitalism, based on the identification of market economy with high finance, freemasonry, democracy and Jewish circles, who, according to Orano, were represented by the mayor of Rome, Ernesto Nathan, Prime Minister Luigi Luzzatti and the socialist leader Claudio Treves, all of them prominent Jews. In 1932 Mussolini himself praised Orano’s anti-Jewish syndacalism as a fore-runner of Fascism.

«In the great river of Fascism you will find the currents which stem from Sorel, Lagardelle and all the French revolutionary syndacalists of the review *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, and mainly from the cohort of the Italian revolutionary syndacalists, who between 1904 and 1914 brought a note of novelty to the Italian socialist context, already emasculated by the Giolittian fornication with Olivetti’s *Pagine Libere*, Enrico Leone’s *Divenire Sociale* and Orano’s *La Lupa*»⁷¹.

70. H. Arendt, *Antisemitism in The Jewish Writings*, New York, Schocken Books, 2007, p. 109.

71. B. Mussolini, *La dottrina del fascismo*, Roma, Treves, Treccani, Tomminelli, 1932, p.



One year later the publication of Orano's book, Louis Ferdinand Céline published *L'École de cadavres*, proposing once again the stereotype of the Jewish feudality: «only one real omnipotent family controls France, the Jewish Family, the great international feudalism»⁷².

XIII. Anti-Semitism has shared with any ethnocentric prejudice the hatred towards some presumed as unchangeable “characteristics” of the Jewish community, but such hatred was founded only on what the word “Jew” represented for the non Jews.

In this representation features of a psychopathological obsession with fantasies and imaginary dangers can be easily recognized. The meaning of anti-Jewish stereotypes cannot be limited to its literal sense, and it has to include the connection between the psychological condition and the function of symbols in historical contexts⁷³. This is the case of the stereotype of usury.

The representation of the bank and high finance as expressions of “new financial Jewish feudality” was made through distorting it into the symbol of identity of all Jews, and the symbol became more “real” in its effects than any other aspect of the Jewish community members’ real characters and practices. The “financial feudality” ended up by representing the whole social group, while the “new usury” symbolized the menace of the imagined hostile Jewish power, and expressed the psychosis lived by those who proposed the stereotypes. Thus, the stereotypes revealed the psychological

2. For the attack to Nathan, Giolitti, Luzzati and Treves, see P. Orano, *Nathan e il blocco*, in «La Lupa», 5th March 1911. The anti-Jewish campaign was launched by Orano through *Gli ebrei in Italia*, Roma, Pinciana, 1937. See also *Antisemitismo(s): un eternal retour?*, single issue «Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine», n. 62- 2/3, april- septembre 2015, by Marie-Anne Matard-Bonucci.

72. See L.F. Céline, *L'école des cadavres*, Paris, Éditions Denoël, 1938, p. 235 and (P.A. Cousteau, *L'Amérique juive*, Paris, Les Éditions de France, 1942). On these works see T. Judt, *Past Imperfect, French Intellectuals 1944-1956* (French tr.: *Un passé imparfait. Les intellectuels en France*, Paris, Fayard, 1992) and H. Godard, *Céline*, Paris, Gallimard, 2011.

73. Y.H. Yerushalmi, *Freud's Moses*, p. 137. Yerushalmi attributes a fundamental role to E. Sellin's work (*Moses und seine Bedeutung für die israelitische-jüdische Religionsgeschichte*, Leipzig-Erlangen, Deichertsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1922), because it inspired Freud the theses of *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), cit., p. 65. See also S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo* (1931), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Work of Sigmund Freud*, vol. III, cit.

condition of the person who used them⁷⁴. Stereotypes permitted to avoid understanding modern economy and at the same time to give concrete form to the sensation of danger in front of the possibility of economic crisis. In conclusion, the faith in new stereotypes was not so different from the old irrational faith in the ritual homicide and in the profanation of the host on behalf of Jewish usurers, as it had spread in the Christian society in the XIIth century. In the XIIth, as well as in the XIXth century, stereotypes always expressed the uneasiness of those who wavered in doubt and pushed them towards an evil conspiracy: «Thus, chimerical assertions certainly attribute characteristics to outgroups that have never been observed [...] and they apply them to all real individuals, who can somehow have been identified as members of the outgroup. Here, we may think of the Nuremberg laws and of their consequences»⁷⁵.

Christians have fought for centuries with Jews, “their older brothers”. Legal emancipation made the Jews entitled to citizenship rights, but triggered a very strong social reaction, directed mainly at the Jews.

Economic individualism contradicted the universalism of rights and social reaction collided with the breaking of the Ancient Regime, with the resolutions of the Constituent Assembly, and with the traditional concept of the sovereign power and Christianity itself. So, the way chosen to try to impose a re-establishment of the Ancient Regime society was the attack on Jews’ legal emancipation and on the Enlightenment, by using feudal arguments to move the target exclusively to bankers and proprietors of Jewish religion, and by diverting social hatred from bourgeois élites to Jewish communities.

74. See N. Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide*, p. 69. In the second edition of the book Cohn abandoned Freudian interpretation.

75. Langmuir, *op. cit.*, p. 336.