

## **Thoughts for the Times on Anti-Semitism:**

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### **Abstract**

In line with the theme of this meeting, its venue, and our identities, we focus on the current unprecedented explosion of antisemitism. Anti-Semitism has been part of Judeo-Christian-Islamic culture for centuries, taking various forms and expressions. After its most horrendous and destructive outburst in the 20th-century Holocaust, it gave rise to the collective determination: "Never Again!" Yet recent and current genocidal outcries against Israel and the Jews testify to the enduring power and relentlessness of anti-semitism. It is our aim and responsibility to try to explore this phenomenon with a psychoanalytic lens, supplemented and assisted by a group dynamics perspective. We rely on our own and others' experiences in this area to endeavor to shed some light on what we think will stay with us for times to come.



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Anti-Semitism"

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## Introduction

Thank you, Eckehard Pioch, for your opening statement. We are grateful and touched by your invitation to your conference, ***“Anxiety, Regression, Disintegration – and Hope? Psychoanalysis in Times of Crisis.”***

We are fully aware of the controversial nature of the topic we want to address, ***“Thoughts for the Times on Anti-Semitism”***. It is indeed difficult at this particular moment to address the topic of anti-semitism without being accused of denying the war in Gaza and its consequences. The allegation is that to speak of antisemitism is defensive, an attempt to divert attention from the suffering Israel has inflicted in Gaza. It is therefore important for us to declare at the outset that we are not here to represent the government of Israel or to defend the devastation in Gaza. More than that, our presentation is **not** a call to regard any and all criticism of Israel as antisemitism. We intend to examine the current rise of **antisemitism** as such and in relation to what it is conflated with, and to do so from socio-historical, group dynamics, and psychoanalytic perspectives.

You and your scientific committee obviously needed courage and determination to invite us in the face of opposition and criticism. We are Israelis, Jewish, and psychoanalysts. We also represent the history of launching and maintaining for more than thirty years the project of Germans and Israelis, the “Nazareth Conferences” (Erlich, Erlich-Ginor & Beland, 2009), of which your society is a loyal sponsor and supporter, and many of your members have participated in. It would undoubtedly have been easier for you to cancel your invitation. We hope that our common psychoanalytic

background will allow all of us to listen to each other and to try to deal with antisemitism, a topic that is not only complex but controversial and painful, perhaps especially in Germany. We are mindful of the fact that this presentation takes place in Germany, where the official stance, put forth by Vice Chancellor Habeck and others, has clearly declared, Never Again!

We will address the following areas: the current explosion of antisemitism; antisemitism and its place and role; the part played in this by large group dynamics and social media; and what psychoanalysis can contribute to the understanding of this societal phenomenon, and also how it is affected by it.

[Mira]

We thought we should say something about our experience of the ongoing war; omitting it would be avoiding an understanding of our present subjective state of mind, which is the trigger for our “thoughts for the times” on antisemitism.

We woke up on Saturday, October 7th to the sound of sirens, ushering us to our safe room. At that point we did not know that we woke up to a nightmare, to a different world, an uncanny, unreal world, suffused with violence and danger; to a country in a state of shock, suffering an acute collective trauma.

Six months later, the country is still in a state of shock, now mixed with despair and grief, and split in its political visions. The belief in Israel’s strength and invincibility has crashed. Being exposed and vulnerable, together with the horror of the slaughter and unthinkable cruelty, by Hamas attack, brought forth images of the Holocaust. As

days passed, we learned, and are still learning, about the extent of the inhuman barbarism of the attack, the actualization of the worst nightmares, the sheer cruelty: torture, beheading, rape, burning people alive, putting a baby in the oven! Hamas terrorists went with GoPro cameras and recorded the pogrom while doing it. They took selfies with their victims while torturing and killing them. Yet, this evidence has not prevented the denial of the atrocities by many. The UN Secretary-General only last week excluded Hamas from the list of the 'Conflict-Related Sexual-Violence Report', demonstrating the saying: "Me Too, Unless you are a Jew". Others find the violence of Hamas justified as 'resistance', 'liberation', and 'self-defense', not making the distinction between the justified Palestinian plea for liberation and Hamas, as a terrorist organization set to annihilate Israel.

This 'Holocaust' revival took place in our land, the only Jewish land, where Jews are to be safe. 'Black Saturday' witnessed more killings of Jews in a single day than in any other day since the Holocaust!

No country can accept that its very existence is threatened, or endure such a massacre of its citizens, or the possibility that it will happen again. The Hamas Charter openly states that its aim is to destroy the State of Israel and kill all the Jews living in Palestine. There are open declarations of plans to repeat October 7th. We believe them, now more than ever. We take their word literally. The promise of "Never Again" became questionable.

Six months later, awareness of the price of war is also clearer than ever. The devastation in Gaza is terrible. In Israel, thousands of families are grieving their lost

family members, lost homes, and lost communities. Soldiers coming back from months of fighting are suffering post-traumatic effects.

As a psychoanalytic community, we are engaged in treating the victims, many of them with multiple losses of murdered and kidnapped family members. We are engaged in developing psychoanalytically informed work with these traumatized people while the trauma is still unfolding. Many of us are engaged with several victims simultaneously, which makes for a unique experience. Here are some examples to give you an idea:

Ruth has lost a whole family of 5 members: her son, his wife, and 3 grandchildren, all murdered in their safe room, sitting together, enveloped in their father's arms. Gila lost her son (17) who was shot while holding the door of the safe room. As the house was set on fire, her daughter (13) jumped out from the window, hid in the bushes, and was kidnapped. She was released after 54 days in Gaza. Joshua, hid in the toilet for 20 hours until he was rescued, his wife was shot, and his daughter (40) was kidnapped and is still a hostage in Gaza, 203 days later. All these people are displaced from their destroyed Kibbutzim, struggling to reimagine their lives, having lost the life they knew. Parts of the north and the south of Israel are evacuated, with almost two hundred thousand people displaced from home, refugees in their own country.

It is important to speak about the current war as the trigger that unleashed an unparalleled tsunami of antisemitism all over the world. A tsunami that is now endangering Jewish communities to a degree not experienced since WWII. Blaming and persecuting Jews all over the world demonstrates that the rage against Israel is the rage against Jews wherever they are, hence it is intrinsically antisemitic. It reflects the conflation of anti-Israel feelings with antisemitism. More about this later.

## **The long history of antisemitism**

Prejudice has been an aspect of human society from its very beginning, and antisemitism is undoubtedly one of its earliest forms. The roots of antisemitism reach back to ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome. A poignant controversy that often emerges is whether to treat antisemitism as unique or in conjunction with prejudice in general. In our view, the latter view is an attempt to downgrade antisemitism by denying its uniqueness, analogously to the denial by minimization of the Holocaust in comparison with the many millions killed in WWII.

There has been a huge rise in antisemitism following October 7 and the war and devastation in Gaza. The cries, "From the river to the sea Palestine will be free" are fully acceptable to so many, aware or unaware that they spell the desire to eradicate the Jewish state. There has been a significant wave of attacks, violence, discrimination, and life-threatening outbursts all over Europe, the United States, Canada, Australia and Latin America. In Germany alone, a 320% rise in antisemitism has been reported. Jews are told to hide their religious symbols, and their gathering places (synagogues, community centers) are guarded, they are once again afraid for their lives. Time does not allow to list the numerous incidents but they are available in the press and on the internet. We all saw the spread of violent demonstrations in US universities. Jewish students, harassed and fearful, were offered remote online classes; for the first time since the Third Reich, a Jewish professor was barred from entering Columbia University

in NY! The campus was threatened with becoming *Judenrein*. These news bits are representative of hundreds of similar ones.

Antisemitism may be dormant until it suddenly erupts. Typically, it comes to the fore in times of social calamities, unrest, and conflict, and it is often the precursor of attacks on democracy and liberal values. In such circumstances, the Jews are usually scapegoated and blamed for the disaster, whether it is the Black Plague, the Great Economic Depression, or Covid. They are blamed for poisoning the wells, for high-interest rates, the poverty of the peasants, the exploitation of the laborers, or designing a bio-weapon; there is no end to the blaming and scapegoating. The lack of rhyme or reason is reflected in humorous stories like this one: One person complains to another about something and says, “And it’s all because of the Jews!” The other one agrees, and then adds, “Yes, and the bicycle riders”. To which the first one replies, “But why the bicycle riders?” and the second one replies, “But why the Jews?”

The current illustration of this logic is perhaps the conflation and confusion of several distinguishable positions: **anti-Semitism, anti-Zionism, anti-Israelism, and anti-Israeli government.**

Obviously, **Anti-Semitism**, the hatred and persecution of the Jews wherever they are and whatever they do, predates all the others. While the hatred and persecution go back hundreds and thousands of years, the term ‘antisemitism’ was coined in Germany only in 1860 by Moritz Steinschneider.

**Anti-Zionism** is the latest mutation of Anti-Semitism. It has become the current manifestation of this ancient hatred, casting Zionism as racism and colonialism, and

disregarding the blatant differences between them in a show of ignorance and lack of thinking. Several fallacies feed this development: The UN General Assembly Resolution 3379 of November 10 1975 defined Zionism as a form of racism and racial discrimination. It was later rescinded in December 1991, but the harm was already done. Another prevalent fallacy is the confusion of Zionism with colonialism (for a detailed examination see Simon Montefiore (2023)). The decolonization fallacy is based on the denial of several major differences: Colonialism designates the arrival of intruders from a home-country to another land to which they had no relatedness in order to exploit its resources. The Jews did not have a “home-country,” and they did not come to exploit resources. They were always related to Zion, their historical homeland, from which they were expelled by the Romans, and to where their prayers and longings were directed for centuries.

The confusion and difficulty in identifying antisemitism as distinct from anti-Zionism and anti-Israelism are illustrated in the following account by a Columbia professor. He is severely critical of the excessive aspects of the students' campus demonstrations, their chanting of “from the river to the sea,” and the physical threats and violence against Jewish students. He wonders if these demonstrations would have lasted more than five minutes if they were chanting anti-Black slogans, or something like “D.E.I.<sup>1</sup> has got to die.” And yet, in spite of all his insight, he does not think that *“Jew-hatred is as much the reason for this sentiment as opposition to Zionism and the war on Gaza”* (New York Times, April 24, 2024).

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<sup>1</sup> Diversity, equity and inclusion

To deal with such confusion and to distinguish between antisemitism and legitimate criticism of Israel, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IRHA) developed the following definition of antisemitism and the 3D's test. The IRHA definition of antisemitism reads: "Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities." To date, this definition has been endorsed by the EU Council as well as by twenty-five (out of 28) member-states of the EU.

The "3D's test" of antisemitism is a set of criteria to distinguish legitimate criticism of Israel from antisemitism. The three D's stand for: **D**elegitimization, **D**emonization, and **D**ouble Standard; the presence of any one of which indicates antisemitism.

Anti-Zionism readily becomes **anti-Israelism** (also known as the "new antisemitism"). The logic is clear: It was the Zionist movement that strove to create a Jewish homeland to forestall the persecution and annihilation of Jews in Europe, prophetically anticipating the Holocaust but not enough to forestall it. Significant as Zionism's role was, Israel came into being not only because of it. Israel was created by the United Nations in 1947 with the proposition of dividing the territory and creating two nation-states, Jewish and Palestinian, a solution rejected time and again by the Palestinians and Arab nations. The currently rampant anti-Israel demonstrations in London, New York, Sydney, and leading universities, call outrightly for the elimination of

the Jewish state. There is NO parallel to this! The Armenian massacre by the Turks, even when condemned, did not call for the elimination of Turkey. The enormous atrocities and bloodshed of the National Socialist regime in Germany, as well as the Japanese in Asia, did not result in a call for their elimination. More recently, Assad's murder of half a million Syrians did not call for the elimination of Syria; King Hussein's slaughter of ten thousand Palestinians on Black September did not call for the eradication of Jordan; nor did Russia's atrocities in Ukraine call for the eradication of Russia, or for demonstrations in any university; and the list goes on. It is the one Jewish state that is the subject of demonstrators chanting slogans for its total elimination, even ignoring the fact that Arabs are 20% of its population and most of them do not want to change their citizenship. Does this have anything to do with the fact that it is a Jewish state that needs to be eliminated? Is there another way to explain this other than as an expression of antisemitism? It certainly indicates the use of a double standard. And blaming and persecuting Jews all over the world for what Israel has done or is doing demonstrates the conflation of anti-Israel feelings with antisemitism.

Israel has become the "**Jew**" among the nations. Here are some amazing facts from a study<sup>2</sup> released in July 2023, i.e., before October 7. The study revealed Israel is the most attacked country on social media. X (formerly Twitter) users mentioned Israel in connection with human rights violations:

12 times more than China,

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<sup>2</sup> The study was conducted by the Ruderman Family Foundation and the Network Contagion Research Institute.

38 times more than Russia,  
 55 times more than Iran, and  
 111 times more than North Korea.

The following data are also significant:

Share of Israeli Jews in world population	Less than 1 in 1000
Share of nation-focused condemnations by international organizations directed against Israel	More than 300 in 1000
Share of annihilation threats against Israel of all such threats against independent states	Nearly 1000 in 1000

These numbers demonstrate the Demonization, Delegitimization, and Double Standard of the IHRA definition. These numbers are dated to the period **before October 7**.

Finally, there is the conflation of anti-Israel sentiments with **anti-Israel's government**. Using the 3D criteria it is legitimate to criticize the Israeli government decisions like any other government. Like so many Israelis, we see our present government as the worst ever and are doing whatever we can to bring about its

overturn. We can only hope for a democratic way out of the present situation as soon as possible.

[Shmuel]

### **The unique role and place of antisemitism**

Anti-Semitism is an amazingly unique phenomenon, transcending generational and geographical boundaries, nor is it something of the past. *“The fact that the conditions that made Auschwitz possible continue to this day is “the whole horror,”* said Theodor Adorno in his radio lecture ‘Education after Auschwitz’ (1966). What is it that makes antisemitism so persistent, prevalent, and unique? Much has been written and said about this and we simply cannot refer to it all. However, several observations are pertinent. There is the historical burden of both monotheistic religions, Christianity and Islam, and their indebtedness to Judaism, from which they emerged and separated. It set in motion the need to differentiate themselves through the rejection of Judaism, transformed into the persecution of the Jews, who stubbornly refused to accept their supremacy and acknowledge their truth. For many centuries this “religious” antisemitism was the rule. The rise of nationalism and nation-states led to the perception of the Jews as the unassimilated other, an obstacle to unification, solidarity, and sameness. It led to the assimilation of many Jews who aspired for social acceptance, only to be bitterly disillusioned when the National Socialists came to power. The focus later shifted to the economic dimension, with the Jews accused of having too much power and economic control, of being financial usurpers and oppressors, and the hoarders of the world's riches. It is the gist of the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion”, the 1903, 100-page

document forged by the secret police of Imperial Russia. To this day it is considered one of the most influential antisemitic documents in history, accusing the Jews of plotting their world domination, and the basis for later antisemitic propaganda, including that of the Nazis. No matter what the current calamity or ideological conflict, it is the Jew who is responsible and guilty.

The complexity and multifaceted nature of antisemitism implies that the attempts to explain it are equally varied. It must be emphasized that psychoanalytic formulations based on the individual psyche alone are not capable of dealing with the phenomenon (Fenichel, 1940). We need to resort to the dynamics of large groups and mass psychology.

Viewed from this perspective, it is easy to identify the widespread and malignant operation of projective processes. These projections fulfill the need to get rid of the hated parts of one's self by projecting them into the other and easing the psychological burden of aggression, hatred, and guilt through projective identification. Yet even this is only a partial explanation. It is limited by its recourse to the individual psyche in order to account for a group dynamic. While there is validity to this level of understanding, it falls short of explaining the behavior of the masses or the very large group.

Observations through the prism of large group dynamics and deciphering the characteristic mechanisms that operate within them leads to further explanatory levels which rely mostly on Freud's and Bion's observations.

Freud (1921) suggested that the massive loss of advanced cognitive, moral, and ethical capacities of the individual when in a mob or an unstructured large group, stems

from the combined effects of the replacement of the individual's ego-ideal with that of the leader, and the cross-identification with fellow group members in the idealization of this leader. Bion (1961) unconscious Basic Assumption dynamics, such as Dependency, Pairing, and Fight-flight, although focused on small groups, operate and are prevalent in large groups, in addition to such others as the need for and fear of Oneness (Erich, 2013; Turquet, 1975). Dictators like Hitler, Stalin, Kim Jong Un, the Aiatullas in Tehran, and many more, have perfected the art of creating large group pageantry to consolidate their rule. These larger-than-life spectacles provide a much needed exhilaration, not merely by the show of power and might, but through the merger of the self in the huge group, which fosters a sense of aliveness, belonging, and being connected (Erich, 2003). Joining the large group and the oneness it provides can be frightening for those who fear the loss of self, but exhilarating and inflating for others. A major factor is the loss of self on one hand, while being immersed and united with the leader on the other. It needs to be emphasized that the "leader" can be a person, but equally so an idea, a religion, or an ideology. The thoughtless proliferation of rowdy excesses in the current demonstrations rests on these processes. Large group phenomena are diametrically opposed to logic, clear thinking, knowledge and respect for facts and history. They rely on emotional vehemence and group pressure for solidarity at the expense of individual capacities. You can think of the rallies all over the world chanting, "From the river to the sea" or in university campuses through this lens.

## **Antisemitism in the era of Social Media**

It is impossible to ignore the role of social media in the propagation of antisemitism in these times. It operates in ways similar to large group dynamics. Social media has become an inseparable part of our daily life and it is difficult to imagine our lives without their presence and benefits. It has become the arbiters of facts and of knowledge, especially for the younger generation. The instantaneous proliferation of news and messages, the tremendous influence of celebrities, and the immediate impact of calls for action are indeed characteristic of the worst aspects of large groups. In this way, social media plays a central role in the current spread of antisemitism and the various forms it takes. Social media is also the vehicle for manipulating large crowds of people. We are reminded of Goebel's manipulation of propaganda and his dictum, "Make the lie big, make it simple, keep saying it, and eventually they will believe it." The echo chambers of social media do just that: it is designed to augment the feedback of a person's sentiments so they are constantly reaffirmed by their own amplified views, thus validating their take on reality.

It is worthwhile to elaborate the role of these algorithms (the programmed software) in amplifying antisemitism, as it is not known enough. These algorithms are designed to prioritize content based on 'user engagement'. It means that posts with higher engagement (including likes, dislikes, shares, comments and counter-comments) are more prominently displayed to users. The issue arises because user reactions to posts also trigger rewarding dopamine responses. Consequently, the algorithmic

emphasis on outrageous contents, which tend to generate the most engagement, incentivizes users to contribute more hateful content. This built-in amplification provokes and spreads dangerous ideas, so that antisemitic incidents surged in 2023 to historical record levels.

### **Why the Jews? Antisemitism and psychoanalysis**

Coming finally to the subject of antisemitism and psychoanalysis, it is best to reiterate Otto Fenichel's warning in 1940:

*“Please do not expect too much from me. Antisemitism is a very complex phenomenon. If one wishes to understand it, sociological, historical and political points of view must be employed as well as the psychological one, and opinions vary very much with regard to the relative significance which psychology has in the understanding of social phenomena”* (Fenichel, 1940).

Fenichel points to the problematic leap from the individual psyche to mass behavior, which is why we earlier referred to the large group dynamics.

Nonetheless, there have been some psychoanalytic attempts to decipher the riddle of antisemitism. Immediately after WWII, a conference on antisemitism took place in the US with contributions by Adorno, Fenichel, and Ernst Simmel (Simmel, 1946).

Rudolph Loewenstein, in his book “Christians and Jews”, speaks of *“the tragedy for the Jews that their national home is a country of considerable importance... a wedge*

*of the western world in the heart of the Arab countries"* (1951, p. 201). And further, that *"It is impossible to eradicate from our culture the fundamental traditional elements which form the historical basis for modern anti-Semitism"* (ibid, p. 202). A recent contribution by Rosine Perelberg (2022) deals with the Shoah and antisemitism as the attack on and murder of the dead father. Notwithstanding these and other contributions, a search in PEP shows only 24 articles on antisemitism in their title and 281 references to it in contents, compared to 2671 mentions of racism and 107 in their title.

Psychoanalysis itself has been the subject of antisemitism since its beginning. The connection between Freudian psychoanalysis and antisemitism was pointed out by Adorno: *"Hatred of psychoanalysis is directly one with anti-Semitism, not only because Freud was a Jew, but because psychoanalysis precisely consists in that critical self-reflection that puts the anti-Semites in a white heat"* (Adorno 1959). Freud's awareness and sensitivity to it are reflected in numerous references throughout his publications. He ultimately saw his Jewishness as a source of resistance to psychoanalysis, as well as what it takes to adhere to it:

*"Finally, and with all reserve, the question may be raised whether the personality of the present writer as a Jew may not have had a share in provoking the antipathy of his environment to psychoanalysis. An argument of this kind is not often uttered aloud. But we have unfortunately grown so suspicious that we cannot avoid thinking that this factor may not have been without its effects. Nor is it perhaps entirely a matter of chance that the first advocate of psychoanalysis was a Jew. To profess belief in this new theory called for a certain degree of*

*readiness to accept a situation of solitary opposition - a situation with which no one is more familiar than a Jew” (1925/1950, p. 222, my emphasis).*

The boundary position of psychoanalysis is intrinsically connected with Freud’s identity as a Jew. Freud mentioned his readiness to accept being in “solitary opposition” and not part of the “compact majority” in his address to B’nai B’rith on his 70th birthday (Freud, 1926). There is obviously a deep connection, even if not fully elaborated, between Freud’s self-image as an isolated and rejected Jew and his attribution of the same fate to psychoanalysis. He was right, however, in that the very nature of psychoanalysis assigns it to a boundary position, and its boundary position makes it the target of powerfully conflicting projections. On one hand, it is despised, rejected and denigrated, while on the other, it is idealized and respected as the truest insight into the human mind and condition. This dualistic, peripheral yet central, ambivalent position is precisely that of the Jews. Freud understood this and, as we know, tried to save psychoanalysis from being a “Jewish science”. Given where psychoanalysis is in the present world, as well as the undeniable fact that many of its practitioners happen to be Jewish, it seems that Freud’s attempt was unsuccessful, possibly because it could not be.

So, why the Jews? We want to elaborate on Freud’s suggestion in *Moses and Monotheism* (Freud, 1939, Erlich, 2023), namely, that the roots of antisemitism are in the sphere of *Geistigkeit*, in the Jews being the willing or unwilling representatives of the *Geistig* for the rest of mankind. The world cannot fully reject the *Geistig* because without it, it will not be truly human. But it can hate, despise and express its ambivalence by hating, despising, rejecting, and persecuting those who stand for it.

The transition from paganism to abstract faith, and from the concretism of animism to the dominance of the spiritual and the intellectual, is the crucial shift that enables the mind to imagine and think, to transform sense presentations to mental representations, to symbolism and abstraction. It is perhaps the single most important developmental step mankind has taken, breaking loose of the stranglehold of the senses and their sense-presentations. The energy for this shift derives from Man's destructive capacity as well as the capacity to love and mourn, as in Freud's fictitious reconstruction of the murder of Moses. But the explosion set off by that murder which created the Jewish people, has never subsided. Like a volcano, its ripples continue to rumble underneath the surface, erupting with horrendous irrationality and directing enormous energies of hatred and destruction against the surviving witnesses of the original explosion. The struggle that created *Geistigkeit* continues to erupt in the form of hatred of the Jews. *Antisemitism is therefore forever intertwined with the story of mankind.*

What also persists, is the perverse wish to create a world free from the burdens of morality and spirituality, from historical and interpersonal diversity and generational differences. Nazi ideology represents precisely this perverse solution. It is the *perverse wish and its enactment* – as in all perversions – to create a new world, free of Jews and the *Geistigkeit* they represent. Nazi ideology expresses the perverse psychotic wish to obliterate differentiated civilization, painstakingly built upon the recognition of differences and the respect accorded to these differences under the Law. Traditional European antisemitism provided the fertile soil and momentum for this psychotic wish to take hold, to overtake and sweep the entire German society and culture (Bursztein,

1998 [2004]). Hitler summed it up well: "*Conscience is a Jewish invention. It is a blemish like circumcision.*" And years later, "*I freed Germany from the stupid and degrading fallacies of conscience, morality.*"

The struggle between spirituality and the enlightened intellect on one hand, and the hatred of those who signify it, is far from over. Antisemitism can erupt in places and cultures that have never even seen a Jew. Because it stems from the struggle between the drives and *Geistigkeit*, it will always be present in one form or another. It will usually be directed against those who symbolize the momentous transition in which spirituality, consciousness, and rationality emerged and were chosen over instinctual satisfaction. It is the legacy of Freud's psychoanalysis, of his *Man Moses* and of the Jews, whoever they may be at a given moment in the history of mankind.

What we are saying is that the role of antisemitism is here to stay. The only hope lies in the awareness of its social role.

The current state of our culture and civilization is a fertile ground for the unprecedented spread of antisemitism, stemming from projections, fantasies, and powerful emotions more than from any historical and social facts. One of the most prominent agencies mediating this is social media, soon to be augmented a thousand-fold by Artificial Intelligence. And, as said before: rising antisemitism is often a sign of cultural discontent and the precursor to attack on humanism and democracy. Hence it should be of concern to all.

In conclusion, we want to emphasize the interrelatedness, perhaps overlap, between these seemingly unconnected topics: psychoanalysis, antisemitism, and social

media. Aside from how Freud had already feared the connection between the first two, a possible common danger to both stems from the proliferating impact of social media. A supreme value for psychoanalysis is the pursuit of truth which requires the courage and willingness to stay in a boundary position. Antisemitism is largely based on the distortion and rejection of the Other who is on the boundary vis-a-vis the rest of the world, like the Jew. In this sense, antisemitism is a social disease that signifies the illness of a society. It is noteworthy that both domains, the perception of Jews and psychoanalysis, are critically prone to attack, sustained by the easily falsified perception of truth served and nourished by social media. In a world dominated by social media, we fear that both psychoanalysis and the Jews are bound to suffer.

Coming back to the title of this congress: “Anxiety, Regression, Disintegration – and Hope? Psychoanalysis in Crisis,” we would like to suggest that psychoanalysis may emerge from whatever crisis it is in if it will find its way to greater social involvement and contribution, providing integration and hope.

Thank you for your attention.

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