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Theological Warrants for Genocide: Judaism, Islam and Christianity

Leo Kuper

Religious differences between victimizers and their victims are a common characteristic of genocides and genocidal massacres. Often the significance of these religious differences is very clear, as in the religious persecutions of the Middle Ages, the Armenian genocide, the Holocaust, the root and branch annihilation of settlements during the partition of India, the massacres of Hindus in East Pakistan (Bangladesh), the threatened genocide against the Baha'is in Iran, and the seemingly interminable conflicts in the southern Sudan. At other times, the influence of religious difference is more indirect, compounded with many other elements, for example in Uganda under Amin, or the massacres of Ibos in Northern Nigeria.

This article concentrates on one aspect of religious differentiation, the theological warrants for genocide in the sacred texts in the interrelated religions of Judaism, Islam and Christianity. The influence of these texts is analyzed in historical perspective, with emphasis on the broad societal context, and the power to engage in genocidal action. The contemporary spread of religious fundamentalism enhances the significance of these texts, as notably in Israel and its occupied territories, where the clash of religious fundamentalisms introduces a particularly threatening extremist element in the ongoing conflict.

Introduction

The intimate relationship of religious difference to genocide was very clear in the Middle Ages with its religious wars, the persecution of heretics, the annihilation of the Albigensians and other dissident sects, the Crusades, and the pogroms. And it is a continuing element in genocide to the present day. When the United Nations adopted the Genocide Convention in 1948, defining the crime in essence as the deliberate destruction of a group in whole or in part by killing its members, or deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction, it described the victims as racial, ethnic, religious or national groups.

However this understates the significance of religious difference, since a common characteristic of genocide is the presence of religious difference between perpetrators and victims, whether racial or ethnic or national groups. The religious difference is often superimposed on other elements of differentiation – of race or ethnicity, cultural heritage, inequality in

economic and political participation and in human rights, and a measure of segregation or territorial concentration. The religious affiliation then becomes part of a distinctive social status, and often contributes at a deep formative level to alienation from other groups in the plural structure of the society.

The general theme of this article deals with one aspect of the religious element in genocide, namely the legitimation of genocide in the sacred texts and its consequences, with special reference to the interrelated religions of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. The new movements of religious fundamentalism in the three religions enhance the significance of these genocidal texts.

The emphasis in this discussion on theological warrants for genocide introduces a one-sided perspective on the sacred writings. These writings also offer many precepts of the highest ethical order, which would encourage conciliation and the peaceful resolution of conflict. The teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, for example, might have prevailed in the relations of the Catholic Church to dissident Christian sects and to Jews: it has been influential in many other contexts. So too, both Judaism and Islam are religions of the highest ethical principles, aspiring to a Utopian or Messianic realm of universal peace. But the presence of religious difference in so many annihilatory conflicts and massacres is strong argument for the need to analyze the potential significance of the religious element in genocide.

Theological and Secular Legitimations for Genocide

Systems of belief have a quite variable and often indeterminate influence on action. They may serve as rationalizations, or as justifications, for courses of action already decided upon, in which case it is as if the courses of action had sought out their own legitimizing ideologies. Thus Ruether and Ruether in their recent study *The Wrath of Jonah – Crisis of Religious Nationalism in the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict* choose as their theological paradigm the Book of Jonah so as to convey the message that God is not the God of one people only, but created and loves all nations, wishing them 'to live together in the peace that springs from repentance and obedience to the one God who created them all, rather than in violence and desire for the annihilation of the other'.[1] The sacred text serves them as a justification or sanctification for their advocacy of ethnic conciliation. Similarly the Puritan identification of Native Americans as Canaanites and Amalekites was clearly an ideology of colonization, motivated by conflicts with the indigenous inhabitants of the land and rationalized or justified by the sacred texts.[2]

In other cases, beliefs have an intimate and motivating relationship to action. But they do not act in isolation. They are part of a general societal context. Thus in medieval Europe, it was in areas of rapid economic and social change, and of serious overpopulation, that age-old religious millenarian prophecies concerning the last days took on 'a new, revolutionary meaning and a new explosive force'.[3] So too, Nazi ideologies gained their genocidal force in the period of threatening change and disorientation which followed the First World War. There were the traumatic after effects of the brutal destruction of human life, the dislocations of modernization, the radical challenge to traditional values and political ideologies, the disastrous economic slump with the downward mobility of the lower middle class, and the influx of large numbers of displaced European Jews.[4]

Indeed one has only to reflect that while an ancient sacred text might provide a continuous warrant for the annihilation of vilified or demonized groups, the mass killings carried out under its authority are intermittent. Only under a particular combination of social forces is the sacred legitimation activated.

The religious facilitation of genocide is only one of the many available legitimizing warrants. The bioracial ideology developed by Nazi doctors, who played a key role in the killing centers, drew on the 'scientific' metaphor of healing. It portrayed the Germanic race as an organic unit in need of curative care by purification and revitalization. And since it was exposed to the debilitating influences of the mentally and physically impaired, and since its survival was threatened by contaminating contacts with Jews, the eradication of these elements was perceived as a curative device-healing by killing.[5]

Traditional Communist theory provides no explicit mandate for genocide or mass killing. But it does offer a Manichean perspective on the relations between the bourgeoisie and the workers, an apocalyptic vision of the liquidation of the bourgeoisie, and a historical process leading inexorably to the triumph of the workers' utopia. In these circumstances, there would be no particular obligation to keep members of the bourgeoisie needlessly alive, and historical necessity might indeed offer encouragement to assist in their liquidation.

Capitalism, too, might yield a warrant for genocide, as Rubenstein argues plausibly in his analysis of the British government's policy toward the Irish during the Great Famine of 1846–48.[6] But it would operate more by indirection in allowing the free market to take its 'natural' course, than by active involvement in the annihilation of populations. Indeed, many ideologies have yielded warrants for genocide with varying degrees of plausibility. There are the ideologies of colonization, with their associated racial and evolutionary theories; the animal analogies, used

with devastating effect on many hunting and gathering groups; the supporting ideologies of racial and ethnic domination; the imperatives of imperialist expansion.

Within this plethora of legitimizing ideologies is there anything distinctive in the theological warrants to justify their treatment as a separate category? It cannot be found in self-righteousness, which is encouraged by many ideologies. Nor can it be found in the indifference to the suffering of the victims, nor in the joyous abandon with which the perpetrators sometimes engage in the atrocities of mass murder. Nor are the apocalyptic and utopian visions restricted to religious revelations.

It is probably in the rewards, the punishments and the dichotomies that the religious, other-worldly realm outstrips the secular dispensations of this world. The rewards might range from the remission of sins to an eternity of heavenly bliss (as for those who fall while serving in the holy war of the Islamic Jihad against the unbeliever). The punishments that human beings inflict on each other are horrendous, but hardly comparable to the torments of the Christian hell, though they were anticipated in the Auto-da-fe of the Holy Inquisition, and approximated in the Nazi death camps. In the rewards, punishments and dichotomies of the religious realm, the imagination is emancipated from all the limitations of realistic and technological restraints, and may give itself over, utterly, to unspeakable atrocity or ineffable bliss. However, it should be noted in the case of Judaism that the genocide theme precedes the largely first century creation of the theological concepts of Heaven, Hell, Immortality and Martyrdom.

One anticipates that different systems of belief, with their varied structures of rewards, punishments and dichotomies, would have different affinities for religious persecution and genocidal conflict. In ancestor cults there would seem to be no basis for religious intolerance. Polytheistic religions can readily accommodate other deities, though they may nevertheless be exclusive. Religions in which the devotees seek to attain mystic union with the divine and a state of cosmic benevolence should be remote from intolerance.

Of all the systems of belief, it seems that the most threatening to other groups may be the monotheistic religions, dedicated to the worship of the one and only true God and in possession of the ultimate revelation.[8] It is with three such interrelated religions that this paper deals.

Christianity and Judaism are genetically linked in the sense that Christianity arose out of Judaism, and accepts the revelations of the 'Old' Testament. Originating in the same geographic milieu, Christianity was in competitive relations with Judaism, seeking converts among Jews and among idol worshippers of the environing society. As for Islam, it was strongly influenced by the Judeo-Christian tradition, though its primary

background is Arab, and it grew out of the problems existing in an Arab Meccan society.[9]

Judaism

In commenting on the significance of the sacred texts for genocidal action in the three religions, it is important to bear in mind that in Judaism, in contrast to Christianity and Islam, it was only for a brief period prior to the Diaspora that the sacred texts could yield effective theological warrants for destructive violence against other groups. In the Diaspora there was not the necessary conjunction of religious faith and secular power. This does not imply that Jewish communities in exile were powerless to act against apostasy and heresy or that they were always without centralized organization and authority. Excommunication in its different forms could be a formidable weapon. But the available sanctions were by no means adequate for the suppression of dissident-sects. Thus Hasidism gave rise to a major schism in Judaism, which the rabbinical centers were powerless to prevent. This is not to suggest that if there had been the necessary conjunction of spiritual authority and secular power, the response might have been the annihilation of the sect. Its purpose in referring to Hasidism is to draw attention to the difference between Judaism, Christianity and Islam in the potentiality for destructive violence. It must be noted, too, that during the Diaspora rabbis developed a special concept of non-violent resistance which produced heroic instances of martyrdom, a concept which shaped Jewish consciousness and conduct.

Prior to the Diaspora, there was a period in which Judaism did command the necessary power for destructive violence. This was during the conquest of Canaan and the establishment of the kingdom of Israel. The legitimation for destructive violence was provided by the doctrine of *herem*. This concept contains within it the ambiguity inherent in many taboos, between the sacred and the profane, the beneficent and the malevolent. It is defined as 'the status of that which is separated from common use or contact either because it is proscribed as an abomination to God or because it is consecrated to Him'.[10] On the one hand, it served to promote the militant dedication to monotheism. And from another aspect it may be viewed as an ideology for the conquest of Canaan.

The biblical injunctions against idol worship and other abominations unto the Lord were particularly severe.[11] They specifically proscribed idol worshippers and other non-believers, as being under the sanction of *herem*. The Torah applied the destructive form of *herem* to Israelites who worshipped gods, whether individual Israelites or an entire community. This was the most destructive form of *herem* extending also to the proscription of the possessions of the victims. Human beings were to be

put to the sword and their possessions burnt. There are no biblical accounts of the destruction of dissident sects within Judaism itself.

The condemnation by *herem* was also applied to the seven nations inhabiting the land promised to Israel. Not a soul of these was to be left alive 'lest they lead you into doing all the abhorrent things that they have done for their gods and you stand guilty before the Lord your God'.[12] However, the spoil of these nations was not *herem*. But the commandment to destroy Amalek and his people extended also to their possessions, the Amalekites having attacked the Israelites with great cruelty during their wanderings in the desert.

There was a further form of *herem*, which did not derive from divine injunction, but originated by voluntary act. An enemy might be proscribed as a votive offering to God, designed to secure His favorable participation in the coming battle. It seems plausible, as suggested in the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, that this was the original form of the enemy *herem*, and that it was later transformed into a blanket proscription of the seven nations inhabiting the land promised to Israel, and rationalized as a protection of the purity of Israel's religion.[13] Colonizing zeal would have intermingled with religious faith. But whatever the relationship between these motivations, there were a number of genocides in the early period of the wars of settlement, as notably in Jericho. However practice, as exemplified in biblical accounts, was by no means consistent with the sacred commands. Professor David Lieber comments that most historians do not accept the biblical accounts as representing historical reality, and that to the extent that populations were massacred, it was part of the 'holy war' concept which Israel shared with all of its pagan neighbors.

Now, after millennia of dispersion, Israel again commands effective military power. But there is no clear conjunction of religious faith with military power as in many of the neighboring Islamic societies. Indeed, it is difficult to define the relations between Judaism and the state of Israel, they are so charged with contradiction, ambiguity and compromise.

While the State of Israel is formally secular and democratic, it is a Jewish state, which renders problematic the meaning of secular; and indeed, Elazar and Aviad view the national and religious elements as inextricably tied together.[14] They argue that even the 'non-religious' Zionists were never able to govern without religious groups. Hence 'God and the Covenant have always been, somehow, a part of the government as they are somehow a part of the state, making the religious condition of Israel extremely complicated and one which even challenges comprehension'.[15]

In terms of a status quo agreement with religious groups prior to independence, Sabbath is an official day of rest, Jewish dietary laws are observed in public institutions, religious school systems are maintained and funded by the state, and matters of personal status, primarily

marriage and divorce, are governed by religious law.[16] This is some indication of the significance of the Orthodox religious groups, now greatly enhanced by their role as third parties in the electoral struggles of the major contestants for political power, and by the massive influx of traditionally oriented refugees from the Arab world.

At a different level, and more profoundly, traditional religion in contemporary Israel is a source of the sacred symbols, beliefs and practices needed to legitimate the social order, mobilize the population and integrate the society, while transmitting its dominant values and world view.[17] The return to Israel is a return to the traditional homeland, and for the religiously oriented, a return to the land God promised to the children of Israel. Many of the sacred holidays in the Jewish calendar commemorate historic events in biblical times. Liebman and Don-Yehiya comment that 'these holidays are increasingly interpreted according to their religious origin ... but they are also invested with national meaning in a manner consistent with a reinterpretation strategy ... . Traditional religious symbols penetrate, and are incorporated into, the civil religion', though this does not imply 'a generalized return to traditional religion'.[18]

While religion contributes to the integration of Israeli society, it is also divisive. The very nature of Israeli society as a Jewish state excludes Arabs, and this combined with the need for internal security, relegates Arabs to a diminished civil status as a dominated minority, notwithstanding the declared policy of political democracy.[19] The divisiveness extends also to the Jewish population in the form of conflict between an extreme Orthodoxy aggressively seeking to impose its certitudes and religious practices on the non-religious or mildly conforming majority, while the specially favored institutionalized status of Orthodox Judaism and the concomitant exclusion of Reform and Conservative Judaism are a further source of division.[20]

Probably the major integrating factor which restrains the conflicts within the Jewish population is the hostility of much of the outside world, and the perpetual state of war maintained by neighboring Arab states against Israel, with the denial of Israel's right to exist, and the threat of genocide. This hostility exemplifies a traditional view of Jewish–Gentile relations, expressed in the phrase 'Esau hates Jacob', and as actualized in the annihilation of European Jews in the Holocaust.[21] It is the Holocaust which 'plays a critical role in Israeli civil religion', its memorial Yad Vashem, assuming a 'sanctity not only because it symbolizes six million Jews who died but because it symbolizes the Jewish people and culture of the Diaspora whose suffering and death legitimize the Jewish right to Israel'.[22] It is a secular legitimation infused with sacred sentiment.

The contradictions between the ethnic exclusiveness of Jewish religious nationalism and the universalist ideals of a secular democratic state

profoundly affect the status of Palestinians both within Israel and in the occupied territories, as Ruether and Ruether demonstrate in *The Wrath of Jonah*. They argue that within Israel, Palestinians have been rendered politically invisible and economically exploited by a policy of 'fragmentation. isolation from contact with Israelis and from one another, proletarianization (that is, loss of land and reduction to a paid labor force in the lowest sectors of the Israeli economy), economic and educational underdevelopment, political neutralization and co-optation'.[23]

So too, in the occupied territories, policy is directed to making the Palestinians 'invisible' by appropriation of land and water, integration of basic services, and of labor and markets in the economy of Israel, establishment of Jewish settlements which 'serve literally as armed camps, not only in defense of their settlements, but in aggressive retaliation against incidents such as stone throwing', and military control 'for all matters essential to daily life under a constant regime of restrictions and harassments'.[24]

This severe uncompromising indictment is consistent in general outline with the oppressive policies pursued in the history of colonization and in the military pacification of occupied territories, with the denial of the right to self-determination by the conquered peoples. These conflicts tend to be intractable, and this is particularly the case where there is the seeming authority of sacred texts. At this level, the Jewish right to Israel is legitimized by divine decree and ancient settlement. The return to Israel is a return to the Holy Land, to the biblical world with its covenant and promises, its prohibitions and sanctions, its moral precepts and paradigms. It is a return to the world of the prophets and of messianic expectations.

Many circumstances encourage these expectations. It was surely inconceivable that after millennia of exile and persecution and the overwhelming catastrophe of the Holocaust, Israel should be reestablished in its traditional homeland. And was not the victory of the Six-Day War against the massed armies of the Arab states, and the liberation of Jerusalem and the holy places 'some special revelation of God's intentions, evidence of the fulfillment of messianic promises'?[25] And how should one interpret the victory in the Yom Kippur war which caught the Israeli army by surprise and which many Israelis feared would end in defeat and annihilation? Following Rabbi Yehuda Amital, should it not be comprehended in its messianic dimension and, indeed, viewed as a struggle against Western civilization and its impurity?[26]

However, comprehension as a messianic dimension permits many interpretations with different concepts of messianic redemption, as in the confrontation between Christianity and Judaism, between the Christian concept of redemption as an event in the spiritual realm, reflected in the

private world of each individual, and the Judaic concept of redemption as a public event taking place in the visible world and within the community.[27] So, too, in Israel, there are varied interpretations of the messianic dimension and its contemporary significance.

If the messianic era is to include Isaiah's vision of a world in which 'the wolf shall lie down with the lamb and the leopard shall lie down with the kid', then the fratricidal nature of group relations in the Middle East and of the Arab–Israeli confrontation would represent the absolute antithesis to this idyllic cosmic transformation. It would certainly seem to exclude the belief that Israel was now in an era which represents the beginnings of redemption. But this is a difficulty which can be transcended theologically, as the late Uriel Tal documented in his analysis of the 'Foundations of a Political Messianic Trend in Israel'.[28]

One solution is to detach the Utopian cosmic transformation from the messianic era as referring to the world to come. According to this view, 'the messianic era finds its empirical expression in the concrete political change Israel has wrought, the essence of which is the abolition of political subjugation or exile'. A second solution finds evidence of cosmic transformation in 'the return to the soil, life within nature, the agricultural achievements, the secular creativity, ... the Zionist activity, the military victories upon the holy soil, the blood spilt on this soil and for its sake'. This view substitutes the attainment of a prophetic messianic age for the political messianic age of the first solution.[29]

Some expressions of the messianic trends in Israeli society, with their fundamentalist immersion in the biblical world, have serious implications for Israeli–Arab relations. The messianic movement, Gush Emunim, is dedicated to the settlement of the land in its biblical entirety as its contribution to the redemptive process and in fulfillment of God's commandment to the children of Israel.[30] Conflicts over land are a particularly explosive issue. Then too, at the level of human rights, the introduction of the biblically defined status for strangers (*gerim*) would derogate from the constitutional rights of Arab residents. And Tal, in his analysis of these issues, quotes from an article by Rabbi Hess on 'The Commandment of Genocide in the Torah', in which he proclaims that 'the day will come when we will all be called to fulfill the commandment of this religiously commanded war, of annihilating Amalek' – the commandment of genocide.[31]

The position of Rabbi Hess has had virtually no support, even in extreme Orthodox circles. The fundamentalist messianic movement Kach, on the other hand, has a significant following. It is organized as a right wing political party under the leadership of Rabbi Meir Kahane. In contrast to Gush Emunim, which does not conceive of an Arab evacuation as an inevitable consequence of its settlement activities, Kach is com-

mitted to the 'total eviction of the Arabs'.[32] The title of Rabbi Kahane's book, *They Must Go*, declares this unequivocally.[33]

Kahane's argument rests partly on secular grounds: the ultimately insoluble contradiction between a Jewish state of Israel and a democratic state in which Arabs and Jews have equal rights; the illusion that two large nations can occupy the same land in peaceful coexistence, when they differ in every possible respect; and the imbalance between an Israeli–Arab birthrate, which is the fourth highest in the entire world, and a modest Jewish birthrate.[34]

His movement, however, derives its emotional and compelling force from fundamentalist interpretations of biblical texts and messianic expectations. The Jewish people is the Chosen of God, unique and holy. Its right to the Holy Land of Israel derives not from favor or historical residence, but from 'title granted by the Builder and Owner ... to serve the Jewish people, so that they have a distinct, separate place in which to fulfill their obligation' under the Covenant. 'There can be no others who freely live there, let alone share sovereignty and ownership'. A religious creation, the State of Israel is the beginning of redemption, with final messianic redemption dependent on faith.[35]

In his analysis of Kach, Sprinzak draws attention to 'Quasi-Fascist' manifestations in its anti-alien sentiment and racist symbology, in its propaganda and personality cult, and in its legitimation of violence and the engagement of some of its followers in anti-Arab atrocities.[36] It should be emphasized, however, that neither fundamentalism nor messianism necessarily carry any threat to other groups. But when they are associated with theologically grounded legitimation of violence, they may set in motion an extreme process of polarization and escalating conflict. These potentialities are somewhat restrained by the constitutional structure of Israeli society, the integrity of its judicial process, and the democratic orientation of many of its citizens. However, there remains the danger of a catastrophic confrontation between Judaic and Islamic fundamentalism.

Islam

Current movements of Islamic fundamentalism or of Islamic radicalism, seeking a return to an Islamic social order and a traditional way of life, enhance the relevance and significance of the sacred texts and teachings. These texts offer models and precepts for action with great versatility and applicability to the most varied demands and interpretations of contemporary situations.

In contrast to the animosity of Christianity for Judaism, Islamic doctrine was relatively tolerant. Islam was not initially in competition with Judaism for converts. In Medina, where Muhammad first established himself, an

early conflict with Jewish tribes was resolved by their defeat. There was no basis for antagonism in different interpretations of the Old Testament, since Islam did not retain the Old Testament. 'The Qur'an was not offered as a fulfillment of Judaism, but as a new revelation, superceding both the Jewish and Christian scriptures, which had been neglected and distorted by their unworthy custodians.' And the rejection of Muhammad's claim to be the Messenger of God was 'less significant, less wounding, less of a reproach than the Jewish rejection of Christian claims'.[37]

In the relationship of Islam to other religions, Judaism and Christianity were specially favored. There is a general acceptance in Qur'anic teaching of the prophetic revelations as of 'universal import', and Jesus is recognized as a Messenger of God, as one prophet in a series of prophets. This line of prophecy, however, is conceived as culminating in the mission of Muhammad, 'the seal of the prophets'. His revelation is the final, the perfect revelation.[38] Within the series of prophets and prophecies, the privileged position of Jews and Christians rests on their status as 'Peoples of the Book'.

Lewis comments that there are many passages in the Qur'an, in which hard words are used about the Jews, but that these passages are concerned for the most part with the Prophet's own conflict with them, and are to some extent balanced by other passages, speaking more respectfully, and prescribing a measure of tolerance.[39] Rahman, in a commentary on Islam, observes that the Qur'an 'deplores the diversity of religions and religious communities, which it insists is based on willful neglect of the truth, and denounces both Jews and Christians as "partisans, sectarians", with "each sect rejoicing in what itself has" '. He comments further that the Qur'an in fact envisages some sort of cooperation between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and invites Jews and Christians to join Muslims in such a goal.[40]

The world, in early Islamic juristic doctrine, consisted of two zones, the Abode of Islam (*dar al-Islam*), where Muslims ruled, and the Abode of War (*dar al-harb*), the rest of the world. This is, of course, a sharp and threatening dichotomy. A less threatening conception includes a third zone, the Abode of Peace, those countries or powers with whom Muslims have peace pacts. But peace with non-Muslim states was viewed as provisional, and ideally of limited duration.[41]

The divisions into religious zones, defined in relationship to Islamic imperium, reflected the Muslim mission to expand the territory and rule of Islam throughout the world. The duty was to continue until the universal domination of Islam had been attained. The means for this expansion were persuasion, conversion, submission, and the *jihad*, usually equated in Western writing with the notion of 'holy war'.[42] It was one of the gates to paradise, with rich heavenly rewards assured to those

who devoted themselves to it, and the revered status of martyrs for the fallen.[43]

The Peoples of the Book, the scriptural peoples (Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, and by special interpretation other groups), could live in the Islamic state without conversion, conditional, however, on submission to Muslim rule and payment of a special tax. Their status of *dhimmis* (tolerated peoples) secured them protection and the right to follow their own religions, but under conditions of discrimination, and acceptance of inferiority and humiliation.

This discrimination varied on the whole from tolerance and acceptance in times of Islamic strength and creativity to oppressive restraint and persecution when Islamic power was under threat or disintegrating. It has varied too in different countries, being highly repressive in Morocco and in Iran. 'Expulsion, forced conversion, and massacre – all three of rare occurrence in Sunni lands – were features of life in Iran up to the nineteenth century'.[44] Discrimination also varied under different regimes. The messianic movement of the Almohads was highly intolerant of deviations from its version of Islam. Lewis writes that it was probably in the period of Almohad rule (twelfth century) 'that Christianity was finally extirpated from North Africa. Jews, too, suffered badly in North Africa and Spain and – exceptionally in Muslim history west of Iran – were given the choice between conversion, exile and death'.[45]

There was, thus, no theological warrant for genocide against 'scriptural peoples' who submitted to Islamic rule. But in the extension of Islamic rule and in the refusal to submit these peoples were exposed to the threat of mass killings. They were also vulnerable as protected groups, as *dhimmis*, if some members failed to conform to the required standards of submissive behavior. Thus, the populace might engage in the massacre of religious groups, should their members overstep the conventional bounds of respect and humility, or attain too high an office, as in the massacre of Jews in Granada in the eleventh century.[46] However, this may be a more general characteristic of systems of domination, though rarely expressing itself in the extreme form of the annihilation of a people. One recalls the biblical story of Esther, Mordecai and Hamman in the reign of Ahasuerus, or the extra-legal sanctions for submissive behavior in racist and caste societies.

The Turkish genocide of Armenians in 1915–16 was not a reaction to transgression against the standards appropriate for former Christian *dhimmis*. There is wide agreement that the Young Turk government was motivated by an extreme chauvinistic nationalism, and not by religious fanaticism. But it unleashed religious fanaticism in the most varied strata of Turkish society, which participated extensively in the genocide. The declaration of a *jihad* by the Sultan on the outbreak of the First World War

must surely have inflamed religious passions within the Ottoman Empire, though it was primarily directed to Muslims outside the Empire where it had little effect.

There was the same pattern of religious atrocities in the genocide as in the massacres of 1895–96 under the Sultan Abdul Hamid II, the forced conversions under the threat of death, the seizures of children to be brought up as Muslims, the atrocities against priests – humiliated, tortured, murdered – and the desecration and destruction of holy places.[47] Lepsius documents these atrocities, but he balances his account by reference to the protests of many responsible government officials and Turkish citizens against the deportations and extermination, attributing responsibility to the government, ruling under the Committee of Union and Progress, and acting through the provincial representatives of the Committee, the militias they recruited from Kurdish tribes, bands of brigands and criminals, and the army and police.[48]

The theological dispensation of conditional tolerance for religious difference extended to the 'scriptural peoples', was not available for idolaters or pagans. The alternatives for them were conversion or destruction. They were always under threat of the *jihad*, though this might be deferred until circumstances were favorable, or on payment in goods.[49]

The juristic interpretations of *jihad* were derived primarily from the Prophet's teaching and conduct as they evolved during his lifetime, in response to changing circumstances. There was thus room for variation in emphasis and conception, and for conflicting interpretations by the jurists, and also the possibility of selecting different models for action. The resulting flexibility in the doctrine of *jihad* lent itself readily to adaptation in changing historical contexts of action.

The *jihad*, as the means for the extension of Islam and for its defense, was appropriately invoked against the Crusaders. However, the Islamic *contra-jihad* only attained its full expression after appreciable delay.[50] This is surprising, given the fact that the Crusades were after all religious wars directed against the Muslim infidel, and that the first Crusade, launched by Pope Urban II, with promises of spiritual rewards, was already accompanied by genocidal massacres in the conquest of Jerusalem, and by indiscriminate massacres and terrorism perpetrated by the crusading Tafurs.[51]

The *jihad* was also appropriately invoked against the colonizing powers, for example by Abd al-Qadir against the French in Algeria. His campaign was conducted with great courage and persistence, and with careful observance of the prescriptions of Islamic law, but it was overwhelmed by the French army's war of extermination.[52]

The doctrine also lent itself to adaptability in response to the decline in Arab power, and the assaults of modernization and Westernization with

their negative perceptions of the *jihad* as 'Holy War'. Khaddurie's *War and Peace in the Law of Islam* is an example of a modern response to contemporary pressures on the Islamic world.

Khaddurie defines the *jihad* in its juridical theological meaning as 'exertion of one's power in Allah's path, that is, the spread of the belief in Allah, and in making His word supreme over this world'. This *jihad* obligation might be fulfilled, according to the jurists, by heart (combatting the evil persuasions of the devil), by tongue and hands (supporting the right and correcting the wrong), and by war (in fighting against unbelievers and the enemies of faith). *Jihad* as war is equated by Khaddurie with *bellum justum* as in ancient Rome, to which Khaddurie adds '*pium*, that is in accordance with the sanction of religion and the implied command of gods'.[53] Of particular significance is the fact that the greater part of his book is devoted to the Law of Peace, regulating the relations between Muslims and Non-Muslims, an Islamic Law of Nations.

The same theme is explored by Peters in his analysis of the Islamic response to colonialism. In a section on new interpretations of the *jihad-doctrine*, he comments that some modernist authors interpret *jihad* as Islamic International Law by reason of its adaptability to modern conditions and its humane rules; and they emphasize its venerable antiquity, having been formulated and applied 'when, in the rest of the world, international relations were still dominated by barbaric anarchy and the savage law of the jungle'. But it would appear from the analysis that these new interpretations have more theoretical or ideological significance in the defense against Western attacks, than practical application.[54]

These ancient injunctions seem irrelevant to the contemporary scene, in which Islamic states are confronted by the entrenched power of the West, with its massive nuclear armaments, and by the world-wide representative organizations of the Christian Churches, and at a time too, when Third World nations wield appreciable influence in international affairs. Nevertheless, these ancient doctrines continue to exert an influence in certain contexts, notably in the struggle against Israel, and in the assertion of an Islamic identity in reaction to the disintegrating pressures of Western industrialization and its secular ideologies. Bernard Lewis traces many of these continuities in his writings. Fatah, the main Palestinian guerrilla organization, is a technical term for an Islamic conquest gained in a holy war, while Fatah's regiments are named after three battles won in holy wars for Islam against non-Muslims.[55] In Egypt, in the manual of orientation issued by the supreme command in 1965, the wars in the Yemen and against Israel were presented in terms of a *jihad*, the enemies being opponents of social justice and human betterment, namely imperialism, Zionism, and Arab reactionaries. The manual issued to the

Egyptian troops in June 1973 described the enemy quite simply as the Jews.[56]

The fundamentalist reaction to the disorientation of Western colonization, imperialism, and materialism revitalizes the Islamic continuities. It seeks the return to an all-embracing Islamic way of life, traditionally conceived, and dedicates itself to the service of the Islamic community. In the contemporary theocratic regime of Iran the commemoration of the martyrdom of Husayn in 680 is the major ceremonial event in the Shi'ite holy calendar. It reaffirms the ineffable prestige of martyrdom in the service of Islam, introducing a theological weapon of great and deadly versatility.[57] And the attempt to eradicate the Baha'i religion, denied recognition under the Iranian constitution, is presumably an expression of a fundamentalist rejection by the theocratic regime of religious dissidence which arose within Islam itself.

Continuities with Christian anti-Semitism begin to enter the Islamic world in the high Middle Ages, and with the incorporation of Greek Orthodox Christians into the Ottoman Empire. But 'the real penetration of modern-style anti-Semitism, however, dates from the nineteenth century'. It was introduced by Christian Arab minorities, and actively encouraged by consular and commercial representatives and by priests and missionaries.[58] Now, in reaction to the establishment of Israel, and the humiliating defeat of the Arab armies, the themes of Christian anti-Semitism have become a major ideological weapon in the war against Jews.

The chapter headings in Bernard Lewis's analysis of Semites and anti-Semites summarize the progression from a problem of internal conflict within Palestine, through its extension to Zionism as the enemy, and its final expression in the War against Jews. In the process, there is an internalization of Christian anti-Semitism, encouraging some reinterpretation of traditional Islamic teaching.

A large anti-Semitic literature in Arabic, of Christian and European or American origin, draws on an iconography with the familiar grotesque caricatures of the anti-Semitic press in the Christian world.[59] This literature includes nine different Arabic translations and innumerable editions of the notorious forgery, the inflammatory *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which purveys the myth of a world Jewish conspiracy;[60] and Lewis comments that the volume of anti-Semitic publications, the eminence and authority of those who write, publish and sponsor them, their place in school and college curricula, their role in the mass media, would all seem to suggest that classical anti-Semitism is an essential part of Arab intellectual life at the present time – almost as much as in Nazi Germany.[61]

It is by no means only Islamic communities which are the recipients of this anti-Semitic propaganda. On the contrary, some of the Arab countries and Iran are now the main centers for the dissemination of international anti-Semitism throughout the world.[62] And the Arab states, *in association with the Soviet bloc and many Third World countries*, use their oil-rich prestige to influence the proceedings and resolutions of the United Nations, where the demonization of Israel (and of Jews) attains its ultimate manifestation in routine rituals of outcasting and degradation.

As a result of the Israeli War of Independence and the ideological polarization of group relations, and under the stimulus of widespread persecution, mounting harassment, and occasional massacre, there has been a general flight of Jews from the Arab countries to Israel. The ancient Jewish communities are now virtually extinct, with sizable remnants remaining only in Morocco and Tunisia.[63]

Christianity

Some of the variables of general relevance to theological warrants for genocide may be derived from an analysis of the especially intimate relationship of Christianity to Judaism. Others are more specific to this relationship. This is true of the variables related to the genetic linking of Judaism and Christianity, with Christianity developing out of Judaism. These include Jewish reactions to the Christian revelation, and the Christian view of the Judaic revelation. Do Christians regard it as superseded? And how do they react to the refusal of Jews to accept Jesus as the Messiah or the Son of God? What is their response to the Jewish rejection of the claim that with Jesus the final messianic age had arrived? Is there any basis in Christianity for the transformation of religious controversy into social anti-Semitism? Was the refutation of Judaism implicit in Christian theology in any way connected with the anti-Semitism prevalent in Western history and its culmination in the annihilatory anti-Semitism of the Nazis?[64]

Rosemary Ruether's major contribution to the analysis of these issues conveys in the title of her book, *Faith and Fratricide*, her perception of Christian theology as laying the foundations for fratricidal persecution. She traces the development of an anti-Judaic tradition in the New Testament, arguing that this was the Church's response to the negation of its messianic interpretation of the Scriptures by official Judaism.[65] Christians became the people of God, Jews the apostate people, unbelieving toward the Gospel, and murderous toward its messengers and the prophets who preceded them.[66] The relationship is one of thesis and antithesis, without hope of resolution, save in the last days when the righteous and repentant remnant of Israel will be gathered into the community of redemption. It is

only recently that the Catholic Church has moved toward a more tolerant attitude in the search for mutual understanding between Christians and Jews, and in the recognition that God's saving truth is also operative in the other world religions.[67]

The antagonism of Christianity for Judaism remains, however, deeply embedded in the sacred writings, in the very foundations of Christianity, and this leads Ruether to enquire whether it can be rooted out entirely without destroying the theological structure of Christianity.[68]

Rubenstein argues to somewhat similar effect from a different perspective, that of the dissonance between Judaism and Christianity, each tradition being in the position of 'disconfirming other' to its rival. He views the bitter anti-Jewish animus of some of 'Christianity's most saintly personalities' as serving to reduce this dissonance. 'The same genius, energy, and imagination which led them to initiate a universal religious civilization also impelled them to attack and discredit those whom they perceived to be challenging even by their silent unbelief, the very foundation on which Christian civilization was constructed, faith in Christ as the Savior of mankind'.[69]

The reprobation of the Jews is based on the assertion that they rejected Jesus as the Christ. But this final act of apostasy is projected backward, yielding a view of Jewish history as a trail of crimes.[70] These negative aspects were much expanded by the Church Fathers, giving rise to an extensive thesaurus of derogatory epithets and antagonistic dichotomies. Christian inwardness and authenticity are contrasted with Jewish legalism, Christian universalism with Jewish particularism. Christianity is the fulfillment of that which Judaism 'foreshadowed' in the 'fleshly way'.[71]

Baum, in his introductory exposition of Ruether's argument, refers to 'the radical distinction between the believing church and the blind synagogue, between the Israel of the spirit and the Israel of the flesh, between the heavenly and the earthly Jerusalem. Eventually all the dichotomies of salvation between spirit and flesh, light and darkness, truth and self-righteousness, were projected on the opposition between church and synagogue until the Jewish people became the embodiment of all that is unredeemed, perverse, stubborn, evil, and demonic in this world'.[72]

The social consequences for the vilified group of this theological anti-Judaism was dependent on the power to act in the secular realm. It is only when power is joined to religious belief that the sacred texts can become effective warrants for destructive action against other groups. And Ruether analyzes the transformation of religious belief into discriminatory social practice.

The potential for this transformation was already realized in the Roman Empire in the fourth century, when Christianity was transformed from a

persecuted faith into the established religion of the empire, with the emperors acting as exponents of the theological view of the Jews and as priest kings of the Christian theocratic empire.[73] Imperial and canonical law had prohibited intermarriage and sexual relations between Jews and Christians; commensality was also forbidden (the Council of Elvira, *circa* 315). The Emperor Theodosius (378–95) made it a crime of adultery, punishable by death, for any Christian man or woman to marry a Jew or Jewess. There were restraints on social relations between Jews and Christians, exclusion of Jews from public office (Synod of Clermont, 535), prohibition of Jewish employment of Christian servants (Synod of Orleans, 538), burning of the Talmud and other books (Twelfth Synod of Toledo, 681), Christians not permitted to patronize Jewish doctors (Trulanic Synod, 692), Christians not permitted to live in Jewish homes (Synod of Narbonne, 1050), and the imposition of special burdensome taxation on Jews (Synod of Gerona, 1078). Later anti-Judaic laws decreed the marking of Jewish clothes with a badge, forbade the building of new synagogues or the repair of old ones, imposed restraints on religious observances, and limited the jurisdiction of the religious courts.[74]

Religious and secular persecution of Jews had been greatly intensified following the Crusades. Though the authorities sought to protect Jews, the Crusades unleashed a wave of devastating pogroms by armies of the poor against Jewish communities in the Rhineland. It was said that whoever killed a Jew who refused baptism was forgiven all his sins, 'and there were those who felt unworthy to start on a Crusade at all until they had killed at least one such'.[75]

Ruether writes that the Crusades were

> the great turning point of Jewish status in the Western Middle Ages, a turning point itself expressive of the Church's indoctrination of popular religious hatred for the Jew .... The canonical legislation of the Church in the thirteenth century effected a systematic social degradation of the Jew ... the Church's basic position was that the Jew should occupy no place of eminence or power in Christian society which would ever put him in a position of authority over a Christian, however modest .... Any social contact, living together, eating together, sexual relations, personal conversation, especially in religious matters, was to be prevented, lest Jewish 'unbelief' contaminate Christian faith.[76]

Clerical vituperation was already present in the laws of the Christian emperors. The Jews were referred to as a group hated by God, to be regarded by Christian society as contemptible and even demonic. The epithet 'Satanic' was applied to the Synagogue. It became common to speak of Judaism in the language of pollution, contagion, disease.[77] This

imagery of Jewishness as a contagion was highly developed in the period following the Crusades, receiving its final expression in the segregation of the Ghetto, and the wearing of distinctive Jewish dress (the conical hat and the 'Jew badge', usually a yellow circle). There was also a demonization of Jews. They were presented as children of the devil, employed by Satan to combat Christianity, and accused of murdering Christian children, torturing the consecrated wafer, and poisoning wells. And there was talk of a secret Jewish government, directing an underground war against Christians.[78]

The four centuries that followed were centuries of religious persecution in Europe with the systematic humiliation and degradation of Jews. Many Jewish communities were annihilated in large scale massacres or decimated in pogroms. Jews too experienced the torments of the Holy Inquisition against heretics. Following charges of having desecrated a sacramental wafer, perhaps as many as a hundred thousand Jews were massacred and a hundred and forty communities completely destroyed.[79] Jews were expelled from many countries of Europe or ruthlessly exploited.[80] Disasters such as famines and the Black Death were particularly threatening for Jewish communities, as were periods of religious effervescence, such as the Crusades, or the Easter pogroms following on charges of ritual murder. These Easter pogroms were still being perpetrated in Russia in the nineteenth century.

When set against the long history of Christian vilification and persecution of Jews, the emancipation of Jews is relatively recent. And Ruether comments that there is an uncomfortable proximity between medieval vilification and Nazi anti-Judaism.[81] Indeed many of the images and forms of medieval vilification and persecution recall the Nazi victimization of Jews in the 1930s, suggesting a continuity between them.

Nazi propaganda deliberately exploited the medieval portrayal of Jews, with its obscene fantasies, and its imagery of pollution, contagion and disease. It played upon the fears and frustrations of the German people, by exploiting the demonic threat of secret world conspiracy. Nurtured in the medieval period, and 'documented' in the Russian forgery of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, this combined 'ancient demonological terrors' with typically modern anxieties and resentments.[83]

At the legislative level, there are many parallels between the Nazi measures and the canonical laws against Jews, as Hilberg demonstrates.[83] These included the elimination of Jews from public office, the systematic elaboration of prohibitions against contact (sex relations, employment of Germans, schooling, residence, public transport) and distinctive dress (the yellow badge).[84] Hitler, when confronted by two bishops on the issue of Nazi racial policy, is reported to have replied that he was only putting

into effect what Christianity had preached and practiced for over 2,000 years.[85]

While the many centuries of Christian anti-Judaism translated into social practice, and while the historical proximity of European and Nazi persecution of Jews and the parallelism of laws and imagery are strong arguments for continuity between Christian inspired anti-Semitism and the Holocaust, the issue is controversial. The contrary view emphasizes the independent development of 'scientific' racism, elaborated by the Nazis into a racial doomsday hierarchy, defining the right to survive and the conditions for survival. It lays particular stress on the traumatic after effects of the First World War and the crises of modernization; and it minimizes, or indeed dismisses, the religious input by reference to the Nazi rejection of Christianity.

Perhaps too much can be made of the parallelism between the canonical laws and the Nazi measures against Jews. There is, for example, an appreciable correspondence between the canonical laws and the legal dispensations in South African apartheid. Nazi doctrines and the neo-Fichtean romantic idealization of the *Volk* certainly contributed to its development. However, the roots of apartheid are deeply embedded in Afrikaner society, and the Dutch Reformed Church was a major influence in the structuring of Afrikaner race relations and its systematic elaboration into apartheid. Moreover, it consistently provided biblical sanctification for the ideology, as in the parable of the Tower of Babel and the predestination of the children of Ham to servitude. This moral and theological justification of apartheid was declared by the General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches to be a travesty of the Gospel, and, in its persistent disobedience to the Word of God, a theological heresy.[86] But notwithstanding the declaration, and notwithstanding the manifest mass atrocities of apartheid over three decades, the South African Dutch Reformed Church, at the meeting of its Synod in October 1986, could only commit itself to a mild disavowal of its biblical justification of apartheid as an error and as incompatible with Christian and ethical principles.[87]

In this case, the link between the theology of the Dutch Reformed Church and apartheid is hardly controversial, though analysts may differ in the weight they attach to the religious component. But some basic principles informing the canonical laws, the Nazi measures and apartheid are common in systems of racial, ethnic, and religious domination. These include the prohibition against intermarriage, sex relations and commensality, and the insistence on the maintenance of hierarchical relationships in a wide range of social contacts. Concepts of pollution are also common enough, reinforcing the restraints on social relations.

Clearly, the parallelism of laws taken in isolation is by no means

a conclusive argument for continuity. Moreover, some weight must certainly be attached to the influence of 'scientific' racism. Alan Davies, in a critique of Ruether's analysis, argues that an inquiry 'into the Christian materials and their social incorporation in the Christian nations' should be balanced by an inquiry into the intellectual and spiritual pathology of European society since the nineteenth century, and its supreme expression in genocide.[88] Yehuda Bauer draws a distinction between traditional anti-Semitism, with such varied components as the romantic movement contributing to an increasingly exclusive nationalism, the exaggerated role attributed to Jews in the initiating of capitalism, the theory of social Darwinism, and the 'biologization' of anti-Semitism.[89]

However, there is no inherent logic in social Darwinism or in racist theories which would explain why European Jews were specially targeted for total annihilation, and why there was such widespread support for their destruction. Nor do the traumas and alienation of the post-war years explain why it was the Jews who were selected as the sacrificial victims. The theory that there was appreciable continuity, whether direct or indirect, between the many centuries of Christian anti-Judaism and the Nazi Holocaust seems more persuasive.

A necessary qualification is that the teachings of the Church provided no specific warrant for genocide. The Church wanted the Jews to be physically preserved to the end of time, although in misery and in a pariah status, to testify to the present election of the Church and to witness its final triumph.[90] But the hatred the Church inculcated served as warrant for many of the pogroms perpetrated by the populace, and at the very least provided the psychological preconditioning for wide participation in the Holocaust. Ruether writes that in Christendom, violence had always come from the mob, while the state had been the protector of Jewish continued existence: now anti-Semitism came from the state itself. 'Master of its own eschatology and creator of its own millennium, the Third Reich took in hand the Last Judgment which Christianity had reserved for the returning Christ'.[91]

The relationship of the old Christian anti-Judaism to the modern racial anti-Semitism may be viewed as a transformation. Thus Reuther observes that the same stereotypes and the same set of psychological attitudes were preserved in the change of theoretical grounds, with the antithesis between Judaism and Christianity being translated into an antithesis between Jews and Europeans or Jews and Germans.[92]

Lewis argues to similar effect that when religiously expressed anti-Judaism came to be regarded as reactionary and outmoded, it gave way, in more modern and secular circles, to racially expressed anti-Semitism; and that when racial anti-Semitism became discredited, it was succeeded, for some 'by an anti-Zionism in which politics takes the place previously

occupied first by religion and then by race. The change is one of expression and emphasis rather than of substance, since all these elements have been and still are present. Even now, if one wishes to attack or discredit a Jew as such, one may call him an unbeliever, a Semite or a Zionist, depending on whether the atmosphere and prevailing ideology of the society in which one operated is religious, ethnic or political'.[93] In effect, the argument is that the initial cultivated religious hatred now seeks out its appropriate contemporary ideology. Anti-Zionism, however, is not to be equated with anti-Semitism, but may derive from quite different ideological grounds. And, conversely, support for Zionism, as for example, by Christian fundamentalists, does not exclude anti-Semitism.[94]

An alternative approach to the theory of transformation is to view the relationship of the theological and racist rejection of Jews as a fusion, with, for example, modern German anti-Semitism described as 'the bastard child of the union of Christian anti-Semitism with German nationalism'.[95]

Judaism, Islam, and Christianity

It must be clear from the previous discussion that the role of the sacred texts in genocidal conflict is variable and appreciably indeterminate. This indeterminacy is certainly evident in the controversy over the significance of traditional Christian anti-Semitism in the Holocaust, which is probably one of the most intensely researched subjects in the history of human societies.[96]

Contributing to this indeterminacy are also curious anomalies in the relationship of the sacred texts to genocidal conflict. The central teachings of Christianity are the very antithesis of anything that could conceivably offer a theological warrant for genocide. Still, the hostile characterization of Jews in the dichotomies between church and synagogue and the charge of deicide legitimated their victimization. The policy of the Catholic Church was never directed to the annihilation of Jews, in contrast to its systematic destruction of heretics and of deviant Christian sects. This is sometimes explained by reference to the concern for purity of doctrine, reaching back to the Council of Nicaea (AD325). But struggles for power in religious movements often take the form of controversy over doctrine, so that it becomes increasingly difficult to assess the significance of religious motivation.

In Islam, a combination of elements might provide a theological warrant for genocide. These included the belief in Islam as the absolute, final and perfect revelation; the mission to extend Islam throughout the world; and above all the acceptance of the *jihad* as a means to that end. Practice, however, was less threatening than precept; and within Islam

itself, Muslims were allowed considerable freedom of belief, the minimal requirements for doctrinal and ritual conformity being by no means onerous. At the present time, Islamic imperialist expansion and the incorporation of 'Peoples of the Book' are hardly contemporary reality. But the continuing vitality of the *jihad*, particularly in relation to Israel, carries a genocidal threat. And this may also be present in certain forms of theocratic fundamentalism, as manifested, for example, in the Iranian Government's campaign to eradicate the Baha'i religion.

For Judaism, some of the sacred texts have an intrinsic contemporary relevance, as in God's promise to Abraham that 'all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed forever'. And the return to Jerusalem, the Land of Israel, was readily perceived as the fulfillment of a promise – a divine promise which sustained Jews over millennia of exile, homelessness and persecution. Other texts, however, have a specific historic reference, with no obvious prophetic implication for the future. Thus, the annihilation of the Amalekites in fulfillment of God's commandment would have represented the final event in an historical episode. The selection of this text as a paradigm for contemporary action, and the identification of the descendants of Amalek with the Arabs must surely be impelled by other motivations than theological warrant or divine injunction.

Then, too, the motivational power of the theological warrants must be influenced appreciably by the religious culture. This includes the sacred texts which might serve as warrants for genocide, or shape the hostile attitudes that encourage commission of the crime. They vary in emphasis: thus one cannot read the Pentateuch without being aware of the anathema directed against idol-worshippers as 'an abomination unto the Lord', or the special reprobation of Jews in the Christian Testament. They vary also in form, whether expressed as awesome and peremptory divine commandments, or as threatening dichotomies, or as parables with potentially destructive implications for other groups.

The religious culture includes also the commentaries, the authoritative declarations of religious councils on matters of doctrine and ritual, and the regulation of daily life and relations with other groups. Account too must be taken of religious teaching and services, religious festivals and the events they commemorate, religious music, theatre, art, literature and polemic. And then there are the relations between church and state, and the contemporary contributions of religious culture to civil religion.

The existential situation in the period analyzed must surely be of major significance. Secularization would diminish the significance of the sacred texts, while the fundamentalist reaction to secularism, modernism, western technology and civilization would lend them compelling significance. The establishment of the Kingdom of Israel in the Holy Land may

be perceived as recreating the world of the Bible and enhancing the revelatory and prophetic significance of the sacred texts, while the same event evokes in some Islamic circles resentment at this change in the traditional status of religious groups, tolerated as *dhimmis*.

The sheer complexity of the societal context must surely be a major factor in accounting for the indeterminacy of the religious element in genocide. In the Armenian genocide, as in the Holocaust, there is controversy over the role of religious difference. It is generally accepted that the leaders in the Armenian genocide were not motivated by religious intolerance. But this is by no means decisive. The significant factors are the social forces they activated by the policies they pursued, and the declaration of a *jihad* certainly inflamed religious fanaticism in the populace. Moreover, the motivation of the leaders is not easily determined. It is shaped not only by the political philosophy espoused, but also at a deep and unconscious level, by the intangible influences of conditioning in a cultural milieu with a long history of discrimination against a religious minority.

In both the Armenian and the Jewish case, the religious status was a generalized status in the plural divisions of the society. The Turks, in many centuries of rule, did not attempt to integrate Armenians. On the contrary, under the *millet* system, religious affiliation was emphasized and elevated into a basic principle of administration. Christians were organized in separate units under a patriarch, with appreciable autonomy in spiritual matters, schooling, and the exercise of limited judicial functions, but they were also subject to discriminatory measures. Moreover, the treatment of Christians in the Ottoman Empire had become an international issue in the nineteenth century, precipitating large-scale massacres of Armenians with religious atrocities less than a generation before the final genocide. In the Jewish case, the discrimination against European Jews was much more intense; and it extended over very many centuries. There were long periods in which Jews were pariahs in the host society, and victims of periodic annihilatory attacks. They were subjected also to an accumulated vocabulary of derogatory epithets and obscene imagery.

These cultural heritages are not readily effaced. Indeed, in working in the comparative field of the relations between racial, ethnic and religious groups, I have always been impressed by the depth of historic memory, and the way in which ancient events, seemingly long consigned to oblivion, suddenly become part of the contemporary conflict. The tenacity of historic memory is some argument for the continuity of religious passion in the genocides against Jews and Armenians.

A generalized religious status is by no means the usual case. There are often religious differences without the superimposition of other

differentiating factors. And a surprising element in genocide is the frequency with which the perpetrators and their victims are of different religions, suggesting that even in these cases, the religious differentiation may be significant.

Even where there is a generalized religious status, the theological warrants for genocide are not self-fulfilling, but are activated in particular circumstances. Given the complexity and diversity of the social forces involved, it would seem hardly possible to assess the religious contribution to genocide, whether as motivation, justification or rationalization, without taking account more generally of the genocidal context.

In the genocidal context, I include the structure of the society, its religious composition and relations with the political institutions, its social classes and other social strata, and some aspects of its international relations. It is clear from the preceding case studies of genocidal conflict that the theological warrants for genocide, or other religious beliefs which might facilitate genocide, do not operate in isolation from the societal context. They interact. Thus the religious dispensations of the Catholic Church in medieval Europe created a social status for Jews which became a significant element in the genocidal massacres of the Peoples' Crusades and in later persecutions, including the Holocaust, if Rosemary Ruether's analysis is accepted.

The fusion of the political and religious structures of power offers a particularly favorable context for the perpetration of religiously motivated genocide. Contemporary Iran exemplified this destructive potentiality of a theocratic structure in its threatened genocide of the Baha'is. The historical experience of Shi'ite Muslims as a beleaguered, self-righteous minority and the commitment to Islam as the final revelation, absolute, unchanging and exclusive, did not encourage toleration for the Baha'is. Viewed as apostates for whom the traditional punishment was death, they were subjected to genocidal massacres in 1852, only a few years after the beginnings of the religious ferment which challenged the structure of power and traditional beliefs.

NOTES

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1. Rosemary Radford Ruether and Herman J. Ruether, *The Wrath of Jonah – Crisis of Religious Nationalism in the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), p.xvii.
2. Ibid., p.87, citing Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), pp.55 and 84.

3. See the discussion by Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide: The Myth of the Jewish World Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1967), pp.53ff.
4. See, for example, Richard L. Rubenstein, *The Age of Triage* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1983), pp.146ff, and Robert E. Eriksen, *Theologians Under Hitler* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), p.19.
5. Robert J. Lifton analyzes this ideology in detail. See *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), pp.16–18 and 476–93.
6. Ibid., Ch. 6.
7. In *In Bluebeard's Castle* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1971, p.55), George Steiner writes of the death camps that 'l'univers concentrationnaire has no true counterpart in the secular mode. Its analogue is hell. The camp embodies, often down to minutiae, the images and chronicles of hell in European art and thought from the twelfth to the eighteenth centuries .... It is in the fantasies of the infernal, as they literally haunt Western sensibility, that we find the technology of pain without meaning, of bestiality without end, of gratuitous terror. For six hundred years the imagination dwelt on the flaying, the racking, the mockery of the damned, in a place of whips and hell-hounds, of ovens and stinking air'.
8. Professor David Lieber comments that this generalization, made popular by Toynbee, has to be qualified particularly in the case of Judaism. He writes that to the best of his recollection, 'it was the Maccabees who engaged in forced conversion in their war against the Idumeans and, it is interesting to note, only that the rabbinical tradition was critical of them for that'.
9. F. Rahman, in Mircea Eliade (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1986), Vol. 8, p.305.
10. *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keren Pubishing House, 1971), p.346.
11. The following brief comments on Judaism in biblical times are extracts from Leo Kuper and Gary Remer, 'The Religious Element in Genocide' (in process of publication).
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., p.350.
14. D.J. Elazar and J. Aviad, 'Religion and Politics in Israel', in Michael Curtis (ed.), *Religion and Politics in the Middle East* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1981), pp.163–96.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., p.174.
17. Charles J. Liebman and Eliezer Don-Yehiya define the civil religion in Israeli society in these terms. *Civil Religion in Israel: Traditional Judaism and Political Culture in the Jewish State* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983).
18. Ibid., pp.155 and 226.
19. See the discussion by Sammy Smooha of the extreme discrimination against Arabs in *Israel: Pluralism and Conflict* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978), pp.102–3 and *passim*, and his analysis of the policy of domination pursued by the Israeli government, *Existing and Alternative Policy Towards the Arabs in Israel* (Fernand Braudel Center, State University of New York at Binghamton, 1981).
20. See E. Gutman, 'Religion and Its Role in National Integration in Israel', in Curtis, op. cit., pp.197–206.
21. See Liebman and Don-Yehiya, op. cit., pp.138–9 and 223–4.
22. Ibid., p.9.
23. Ibid., p.136; see also pp.145–54.
24. Ibid., pp.156–9.
25. See the discussion by Liebman and Don-Yehiya, op. cit., p.201.
26. See U. Tal, 'Foundatons of a Political Messianic Trend in Israel', *The Jerusalem Quarterly*, No. 35 (1985), pp.36–45.
27. See the discussion by Liebman and Don-Yehiya, op. cit., p.201.
28. Ibid., pp.36–45.
29. See Tal, op. cit., pp.42–3.
30. For references to Gush Emunim, see the following: K.A. Avruch, 'Gush Emunim:

Politics, Religion, and Ideology in Israel', in Curtis, op. cit.,; D. Biale, 'Mysticism and Politics in Modern Israel. The Messianic Ideology of Isaac Ha-Cohen Kook', in Peter Merkl and Ninian Smart (eds.), *Religion and Politics in the Modern World* (New York: New York University Press, 1983), pp.170–90; E. Sprinzak, 'Gush Emunim, the Tip of the Iceberg', *The Jerusalem Quarterly*, No. 21 (1981), pp.28–47 and Tal.

31. Tal, op. cit., pp.42–3.
32. See E. Sprinzak, 'Kach and Kahane: The Emergence of Jewish Quasi-Fascism', in Arian Asher and Michal Shamir (eds.), *The Elections in Israel, 1984* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Press, 1986), pp.175 and 181. See also R.I. Friedman, 'The Sayings of Rabbi Kahane', *New York Review of Books* (13 Feb. 1986), pp.15–20.
33. Kahane does envisage non-citizen status for a limited number who recognize total Jewish sovereignty over the land of Israel and the absolute and exclusive right of the Jewish people to it.
34. Rabbi Meir Kahane, *They Must Go* (New York: Grosset & Dunlop, 1981), pp.7, 99–100 and 121.
35. Ibid., pp.267–76.
36. Sprinzak, op. cit., 1986 and Friedman, op. cit., 1986.
37. Bernard Lewis, *Semites and Anti-Semites* (New York: Norton, 1986), p.118. See generally his discussion of 'The Muslims and the Jews', Ch. 5, ibid.
38. Lewis, op. cit., p.120.
39. Ibid., p.122.
40. Rahman, op. cit., pp.320–21. Rahman cites the following Qur'anic invitation to Jews and Christians: 'O people of the book! Let us come together on a platform that is common between us, that we shall serve naught save God'.
41. See Rahman, op. cit., p.321, and E. Tyan in *The Encyclopedia of Islam* (1965), under 'Djihad', p.539.
42. R. Peters points out that the concept of *jihad* has a wider connotation than 'holy war', and 'that all wars between Muslims and unbelievers and even wars between different Muslim groups would be labelled *jihad*, even if fought – as was mostly the case – for perfectly secular reasons' (Eliade, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 9, p.89). See my paper for wider connotations of the term.
43. Tyan, op. cit., p.539.
44. Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), p.40.
45. Ibid., p.52. See also Norman A. Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979), p.77.
46. Stillman, op. cit., pp.57–9 and 211–25.
47. See Johannes Lepsius, *Armenia and Europe* (Paris/London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1897), pp.253–331, and *Le Rapport Secret sur les Massacres d'Armenie* (Paris: Payot, 1919), pp.281–8; Lord Bryce, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire 1915–1916* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1916), documents 7, 11, 12, 57, 59, 76, and Arnold Toynbee, *Armenian Atrocities: The Murder of a Nation* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1915), pp.104–5.
48. Lepsius, *Le Rapport Secret*, 1919, pp.177–81 and 284ff.
49. See Tyan, op. cit., p.539.
50. See Emmanuel Sivan, *L'Islam et la Croisade* (Paris: Librarie d'Amerique et d'Orient, 1968).
51. Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millenium* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), Ch. 3. See also Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1951), Vol. 1, pp.265–88.
52. Rudolph Peters, *Islam and Colonialism: The Doctrine of Jihad in Modern History* (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1979), pp.53–62.
53. Majid Khaddurie, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1955), pp.54–7. See also the comments on the concept of *Jihad* in Bernard Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p.72ff.
54. Peters, op. cit., pp.135–9, 159, 165.

55. 'The Return of Islam', in Curtis, 1981, op. cit., pp.15–16.
56. Ibid., pp.25–6.
57. See T. Smith, 'Iran – Five Years of Fanaticism', *New York Time Magazine* (12 Feb. 1984), and J. Kifner, 'Iran Obsessed with Martyrdom', *New York Times Magazine* (16 Oct. 1984).
58. Lewis, op. cit., p.132.
59. Ibid., pp.209–10.
60. Ibid., p.208.
61. Ibid., p.256.
62. Ibid., p.195. A curious development in Japan is the publication of Anti-Semitic literature, also drawing on the Christian thesaurus. See C. Haberman, 'Japanese Writers are Critical of Jews', *New York Times* (12 March 1987), p.Ys and D. Goodman, 'Reasons for Concern in Japanese Anti-Semitism', *New York Times* (25 March 1987), p.Y22.
63. Lewis, 1986, op. cit., p.206.
64. See G. Baum, in Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Seabury Press, 1974), Introduction, p.1.
65. Ruether, 1974, p.64.
66. Ibid., Ch. 3, *passim.*
67. Baum, op. cit., p.4.
68. Ruether, 1974, p.228. The thesis that Anti-Judaism, and indeed anti-Semitism, are inherent in Christology is challenged by T. Idinopulos and R.B. Ward. See their 'Is Christology Inherently Anti-Semitic? A Critical Review of Rosemary Ruether's Faith and Fratricide', *journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (June 1977), 193–214.
69. Rubenstein, op. cit., pp.132–3.
70. Ruether, 1974, pp.124–5.
71. Ibid., Ch. 5, *passim.*
72. Baum, op. cit., pp.12–13.
73. Ruether, 1974, pp.184–95.
74. See Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (Chicago, IL: Quadrangle Books, 1961), Ch. 1.
75. See Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, op. cit., p.70.
76. Ruether, 1974, pp.205 and 209.
77. Ibid., pp.194–5.
78. Cohn, 1967, op. cit., pp.22–3.
79. Abram Leon Sachar, *A History of the Jews* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), p.198.
80. Ibid., Ch. 15.
81. Ruether, 1974, pp.214–15.
82. Cohn, 1967, op. cit., p.23. Ruether describes the Protocols as providing a clear link between Christian anti-Judaism and modern anti-Semitism, op. cit., p.223.
83. Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, pp.5–6, and Ch. 4.
84. Ibid., p.5. Decision of the 4th Lateran Council 1215, Canon 68, copied from the legislation by Caliph Omar 11 (643–644), who had decreed that Christians wear blue belts and Jews yellow belts.
85. Ruether, 1974, referring to an incident cited in *Hitler's Table Talk.*
86. For a discussion of these issues, see D.J. Bosch, 'The Roots and Fruits of Afrikaner Civil Religion', in J.W. Hofmeyr and W.S. Vorster (eds.), *New Faces of Africa* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1984), pp.14–35, and N.J. Smith, 'Apartheid in South Africa as a Sin and Heresy: Some of its Roots and Fruits', also in *New Faces of Africa*, pp.143–52.
87. Pat Sidley, *Press Report*, 22 Oct. 1986.
88. See 'Myths and Their Secular Translation' in Alan T. Davies (ed.), *Anti-Semitism and the Foundations of Christianity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), p.203. See also Ruether's rejoinder 'Old Problems and New Dimensions' in the same volume, pp.246–50.
89. Jehuda Baur, *A History of the Holocaust* (New York: Franklin, 1982), pp.40–48.

90. Ruether, 1974, pp.185–6, 205–6.
91. Ibid., pp.224–5.
92. Ibid., pp.215 and 220.
93. Lewis, 1986, op. cit., pp.252–3. See also his discussion of the same issue in *Islam in History* (London: Alcove Press, 1973), pp.139–40, and his comment (p.142) that 'Anti-Semitism in its modern form is the response of the secularized Christian to the emancipated Jew – but with theological and psychological roots going back to the very origins of Christianity'.
94. I am indebted for this qualification of the argument to Professor Sammy Smooha.
95. See Lucy Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews, 1933–1945* (New York: Bantam Press, 1986), p.123. See also the conclusions of Tal, op. cit., 1975, to somewhat similar effect.
96. See, for example, the different interpretations of the origins of Anti-Semitism and its impact on the Holocaust in Helen Fein (ed.), *The Persisting Question: Sociological Perspectives and Social Contexts of Modern Anti-Semitism* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1987), and her analysis of social conditions variously affecting the participation of European countries in the Holocaust, *Accounting for Genocide* (New York: The Free Press, 1979).