

The causes of anti-semitism

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Why do people hate the Jews? One of the most perplexing paradoxes ever to occur in mankind is the continuity of hatred that exists for the Jewish people. It is so unique in its longevity, intensity, and universality (Why the Jews: The Big Six). Time in and time out Jews are subjected to false accusations, humiliation, forced conversions, Torah burnings, pogroms, expulsions, and ultimately genocide. There has to be a reason WHY this has happened for so long and on such a global scale. Some widely accepted theories that explain anti-Semitism are that Jews claim to be the “chosen people,” but many other religions including Christianity and Islam claim “chosenness.

” Another reason is that Jews are just used as scapegoats, but this is not a reason for hatred it is a result of the existing animosity, and it still does not explain the continuity of anti-Semitism throughout history. The last and most controversial reason is that anti-Semitism exists because the Jews killed Jesus, but in reality it was the Romans who killed Jesus and why is it that Christians have not shown any hostility towards Romans (Why the Jews: Causes vs. Excuses). All these supposed “reasons” for Jewish hatred are actually just excuses to give meaning to the antipathy. More and more social scientists and theologians have taken a deeper look into this phenomenon and have concluded with a more in depth analysis of these antagonistic motives. Dennis Prager and Joseph Telushkin authored their extensive research on anti-Semitism in “Why the Jews?” They divided the actual causes of anti-Semitism into three different reasons: Jews never assimilate; Jews were the first to preach monotheism, and Zionism (the pursuit and preserving of Israel).

These three reasons dispute the widely accepted theories previously listed and they give truth to the meaning of anti-Semitism. For over two millennia, the Jewish people have resisted assimilation in order to keep Judaism alive. This strong resistance to integration has caused a lot of antagonistic feelings and hostility. Nevertheless, “only a people representing a threat to the core values, allegiances, and beliefs of others could arouse such universal, deep, and lasting hatred. (Prager, Loc 300)” It is true that the Jewish people have never lost their individuality because of their unwillingness to assimilate, especially when being threatened with murder or expulsion.

In “Why the Jews?” the process of anti-Semitic hostility is broken down into three successive responses: conversion, expulsion, and genocide. These three steps have been repeated throughout countless areas and time periods. The only reason why it is possible that this could happen so frequently is because there is a common action causing this response, and that is the natural tendency Jews have of only interacting with other Jews. This can still be seen today with the inclination Jewish people have to marrying other Jewish people. Almost all cultures misinterpret these actions as condescending, but in reality it is the only reason the Jewish culture still exists today (Prager, Loc 508). It is not a form of lofty thinking but an altruistic survival method.

In the past, these actions have made countries overwhelmed by the growing population of an inwardly cohesive people; therefore they felt “a threat to the core values, allegiances, and beliefs.” First the response was to convert them so they do not have the tendency to only interact with each other. If that failed they were expelled from the country. For example European Jews
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faced expulsion on an average of every 21 years from 80 different countries (Why the Jews: The Big Six). If the latter fails, the gruesome process of genocide commenced. This can be seen in the year 1096 with the massacre of the Rhineland Jews, the 125, 000 Jews murdered and burned at the stake in the Spanish Inquisition of 1480, and the Ukrainian massacre of 100, 000 Jews in 1648 (Katz).

Ultimately this all culminated with the six million dead Jews in the Holocaust during World War II. The resistance of Jewish assimilation has taken its toll on the people, but yet it is still the only reason they exist today. Judaism was the first idea in history that brought a change in the way people thought, however this change was met with constant resentment. Many people forget that before the first monotheistic religion, the definition of morality as we know it today did not exist. Beliefs having to do with the value of life were nonexistent: for example, human sacrifice, infanticide, and blood-sport were routine.

Even some of the greatest minds of antiquity have condoned such behavior. In Aristotle's infamous treatise entitled " Politics" he said, " There must be a law that no imperfect or maimed child shall be brought up. And to avoid an excess of population some children must be exposed. For a limit must be fixed to the population of the state." Another primeval area in everyday lifestyle was that of love and relationships. In ancient Greece and Rome it was considered the highest form of love for a grown man to engage in an educational and sexual relationship with a younger boy (Spiro).

Relationships with women were considered meager and less “ sacred.” Even when one was in a relationship with a woman, they were not respected (Spiro). For example the Greek poet Palladas once said, “ Marriage brings a man only two happy days, the day he takes his bride to bed, and the day he lays her in her grave.(Spiro)” On the same topic Rabbi Maimonides said in the Mishnah Torah, “ And so our rabbis decreed that a man should honor his wife more than himself and love her as much as he loves himself.(Spiro)” When Judaism came on the scene in ~1700 BCE, it was met with so much force because it was so radically different. This idea of a tight knit family, education as a necessity, respect for peers, social justice, and the value of life all seem to be programmed into our system as if it is a natural thing to want, but in reality ancient Jews had to fight for it to become prevalent.

For instance, “ In the first century, Jews were the only people to refuse to put Caligula’s statue in their temple (Prager, Loc 174).” This act of rebellion and devotion to G-d was met with the three steps to extinguish a group of people: conversion, expulsion, and genocide. From the time Judaism came to be in ~1800 BCE to the Edict of Milan (made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire in 313), the Jewish people went through the grueling process of conversion, expulsion, and genocide for the simple reason that they were too radically different. The idea that the Jews deserve a land of their own is called Zionism and this has manifested itself into the modern version of anti-Semitism, anti-Zionism. Israel was founded in 1948 after 100 years of protest and patience.

A famous Jewish saying that surfaced after WWII was that “ out of the ashes of the Holocaust, the Jewish state was born.(Prager, Loc 432)” Since its

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creation, the state has been met with anti-Semitic attacks through literature, accusations, and U. N. resolutions. It is definitely the main cause of Jewish hatred in the modern world. Israel has been accused of being an apartheid state, taking part in ethnic cleansing, and being a colonial state.

These are anti-Semitic accusations. In the past thirty years Israel has had more U. N. resolutions passed against it than the rest of the resolutions passed combined (UN, Israel, and Anti-Semitism). It began when the Soviet Union formed a coalition with the Arab states to condemn Israel and slowly turn the General Assembly against it.

A clear example of how a bias in the UN manifested anti-Semitism is in 2006-07 when twenty-two resolutions against Israel were enacted. This was at the same time when the Sudanese Darfur genocide was occurring. The United Nations did not pass a single resolution against Sudan, but twenty-two were passed against Israel. All over Europe and the Middle East, anti-Semitic literature is being published comparable to Nazi literature. Rumors that Jews poison wells, run the global economic system, and have a plan for world domination is absolute nonsense, but that's what's being read in countries such as Yemen, Iran, Russia, and Germany (UN, Israel, and Anti-Semitism). There is a distinct correlation between Israeli UN resolutions and the prevalence of anti-Semitism in the world today.

Anti-Zionism most definitely is anti-Semitic in its roots (UN, Israel, and Anti-Semitism). It has been over 4, 000 years since the creation of Judaism and since then everywhere Jews have existed they have been met with hate and animosity. The only exception to the latter is America. The cause of such a

continuity of hatred has to be caused by another continuity of action by Jews. The tendency of Jews to not assimilate, the fact Judaism was the first monotheistic religion, and that Israel has caused so much caustic rhetoric is the main cause of the passionate, deep rooted, universal anti-Semitism.

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