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Invisible Concealment of Invisibility Crypto-Judaism as a Theological Paradigm of Racial Anti-Semitism

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Abstract: The motif of secret, crypto-Judaism has a history that reaches further back into the theological tradition. It no doubt structurally arises from or closely related to the epistemo-political challenges posed by the unworldliness and absolutely inner being of faith, which in the political or inter-subjective dimension immediately raises the question of evidence. The question of evidence, i.e., for the invisible faith, becomes acute in the case of conversion, where the basic premise is the initial absence of faith. Paradoxically, conversion is consequently the establishment of the convert's fundamental faithlessness, of her originally non-Christian element, which the convert, in the very same act of conversion, claims no longer exists. It is easy to see the conceptual constellation that would present the convert as structural deception. At the Iberian threshold of modernity, in the face of mass Jewish conversion and assimilation, this paradox appeared in the image of the "new Christians", the marranos, structurally suspected to be crypto-Jews, to the effect that the ultimate evidence of faith was a certificate of limpieza de sangre, "purity of blood". This paper will follow the historian Yosef HayimYerushalmi in tracing the conceptual link between the Inquisition's notion of crypto-Jews and the racialized figure of the Jew in modern anti-Semitism.

Keywords: crypto-Judaism; Judaism; anti-Semitism; epistemology; politics; religion; theology; Christianity; race

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The notion of secret, crypto-Judaism has a history that reaches back into the Christian theological tradition. It arises structurally from or closely related to the epistemo-political challenges posed by conceptions concerning the unworldliness and absolutely inner being of *faith*. Such notions of inner being, posited in the realm of politics, society or inter-subjectivity, immediately raise the question of *evidence*. The question of evidence, i.e., for the inner and thus externally, inter-subjectively *invisible* faith, becomes acute in the case of conversion, where the basic premise is the initial *absence* of faith. Paradoxically, conversion is consequently the establishment of the convert's fundamental faithlessness, of her originally non-Christian element, which the convert, in the very same act of conversion, claims no longer exists. It is easy to see the conceptual constellation that would lead to presenting the convert as a structural deception.

At the Iberian threshold of modernity, in the face of mass Jewish conversion and assimilation, this paradox appeared in the image of the "new Christians", the *marranos*, structurally suspected to be crypto-Jews, to the effect that the ultimate evidence of faith (for eligibility to high office) was a certificate of *limpieza de sangre*, "purity of blood". According to historian Yosef HayimYerushalmi, the *limpieza de sangre* statutes obtained the highest level of official recognition, by both pope and king, in 1555, "as the last vestiges of active crypto-Judaism seemed to be disappearing and there was no basis

for doubting the attachment of most of the New Christians to the Catholic religion".[1] In other words, *blood*, socially invisible element of life, emerges as a political marker with the complete disappearance of its supposed socially and culturally visible manifestations.[2] This could be described as the political emergence of race in the Jewish body.

Indeed, the logic of *limpieza de sangre*—invisible blood as evidence for invisible faith—is pushed to greater extremes on the other side of modernity's threshold, as the transformation of Jewish being is no longer carried out as *conversion*, i.e., as change of inner essence, as transubstantiation, but as *assimilation*, i.e., as change of appearance, as a phenomenal change, whereby Jews remain Jews—ever more so in view of the disappearance of all socio-cultural manifestations of Jewishness. The ensuing structural deception was clearly invoked in 1843 by the first theologian of the Jewish Question, Bruno Bauer: "Only by way of sophistry, of seeming, would the Jew be able to remain in state life; if he wishes to remain Jew, the mere seeming would prevail and become the essence."[3] Essence as *seeming*, so I wish to claim in this essay, will indeed become in anti-Semitism[4] the very operative definition of the Jewish race, of the Jewish as race, the paradigmatic political performance of which would be the "secret society".

The idea that the Iberian figure of the crypto-Jew is a precursor of the anti-Semitic figure of the racial Jew was already voiced by Yosef HayimYerushalmi, in fact this was the main suggestion of his afore-mentioned essay, subtitled "From the Spanish *Limpieza de Sangre* to Nazism". Pointing at "common traits" and "morphological affinities"[5], Yerushalmicalled into question the scholarly maxim of "radical rupture" (id., 25) between premodern religious anti-Judaism and modern racial anti-Semitism, and more specifically "the never questioned postulate of incompatibility in principle between Christianism and racial conceptions" (id., 27). He spoke instead of "latent *racial* anti-Semitism in premodern Christian Europe" (id.), "actualized" in Spain and Portugal. The difference to modern "organized forms of political anti-Semitism" arises according to Yerushalmi mainly from "the totalizing pretensions of modern ideologies" (id., 29), i.e., not from any fundamental conceptual difference.

In what follows, I wish to develop Yerushalmi's observation, by looking more closely at basic epistemo-political elements in the properly speaking anti-Semitic discourse, from Wilhelm Marr to Adolph Hitler. My analysis will show how anti-Semitic political epistemology could in fact be described as arising from and giving radical expression to the conceptual paradoxes already contained in the theo-political figure of the crypto-Jew.[6]

1. Anti-Semitic Discourse

My analysis focuses on the historical discourse that can be most properly referred to as "anti-Semitism". The propriety of this designation arises partly from the fact that at important moments and in considerable circles this discourse has referred to itself explicitly, declaratively, as anti-Semitism; and partly because this is how it has been and still is referred to without exception from the perspective of historical reflection, mostly critical, largely anti-anti-Semitic. It should be reminded however that "anti-Semitism" has in no way been the sole or even dominant or most

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[1]   On the question of the relation between premodern Iberian *limpieza de sangre* and modern racial anti-Semitism, see Yerushalmi and Carnaud (1993, p. 18).

[2]   See Anidjar (2014), asserting "blood is the *element* of Christianity", such that "a consideration of what blood reflects, produces, and sustains, what it engenders, must take—as one adopts—the form of a critique of Christianity" (ix).

[3]   Bauer (1843, pp. 176–78).

[4]   Current academic discourse employs "antisemitism". One of the goals of this essay, however, is to recall attention to the *epistemic* nature of the modern anti-Jewish ideology designated by that name, i.e., its existence as a form of knowledge, a negative knowledge, "anti-", which refers to some object, "Semitism". It is my claim that the epistemic nature of anti-Semitism has been more or less explicitly suppressed by current academic discourse, an anti-anti-Semitic discourse, not the least through the orthography "antisemitism". My deviation from common usage is therefore intentional and purposeful.

[5]   Yerushalmi and Carnaud (1993, p. 8).

[6]   For an analysis of the marrano as a paradigm of modern *Jewish* philosophy, focusing on the question of language, see Bielik-Robson (2014).

characteristic self-designation of this discourse. In its most crucial moments this term is absent or, as in Nazi Germany after 1935, even explicitly rejected.[7] Referring to this discourse as "anti-Semitism", and thus positing this name and concept as the assembling center around which the perception and comprehension of this discourse are delineated and organized—this operation is a central feature of what I propose to call the discourse of contemporary "anti-anti-Semitism", the central tendency of which is to dissociate anti-Semitism from the Jews. Accordingly, a basic effort of my own so to speak anti-anti-anti-Semitic analysis of anti-Semitism will be to *suspend* the very designation "anti-Semitism", at least as a defining term for the conceptual unity of this discourse, i.e., for what constitutes it as *one*, as *this specific* discourse. Instead, as an initial and tentative attempt, I will indicate a few elements that, so it seems to me, constitute the specificity of so-called anti-Semitism as a reaction to and reformulation of the Jewish Question, and thus, fundamentally, as a modern perception and, most broadly speaking, *knowledge* of Jewish being.

It may sound trivial, but is not: anti-Semitism's central concern has indeed been the Question of the Jews. The Question of the Jews, or Jewish Question, is not an abstract question, but a concrete historical discourse. The Jewish Question has arisen from and concerns what is known as the emancipation of the Jews, the event in which Jews were to become part of the modern European polity.[8] A central, perhaps the central motif of anti-Semitism is the notion or image of Jewish emancipation and assimilation as a *defining* event of modernity, and thus of the Jewish Question as the decisive question of modern politics. This radical *significance* given to Jews by anti-Semitism, in manifold expressions, from early programmatic manifestos to the global politics of the Third Reich, in which the Jews feature as a corner stone for the entire structure of worldview and agenda, this radical significance is without doubt one of the greatest mysteries posed by anti-Semitism to anti-anti-Semitism.

More specifically, however, anti-Semitic discourse is defined by a fundamental *skepsis* regarding the precise nature and significance of the Jewish event of modernity. In this discourse, the emancipation and assimilation of the Jews, rather than signifying the ultimate triumph of human progress and civilization, signifies its ultimate downfall. At work here is something like a critical phenomenology: the disappearance of the Jews by the effect of assimilation would not arise from the non-existence of the Jews, but rather from their omnipresence, what Marx, in his famous response to Bruno Bauer, called "the Judaism of bourgeois society"[9]. It is this basic observation, in its specific anti-Semitic interpretation, which has no doubt guided the thought of Wilhelm Marr, "the Patriarch of anti-Semitism", who was greatly influenced by Marx.[10] Marr's most well-known work, published in 1879, was indeed called *The Triumph of Judaism over Germanism. Considered from a Non-Confessional Standpoint*[11]. This text is deemed as one of the first anti-Semitic manifests, though it makes no mention of the term "anti-Semitism" (it does occasionally use "Semitic"). In it, Marr writes: "I hereby loudly proclaim, with no ironic intention, the triumph of Judaism in world history" (*TJ*, 4). The same self-conscious spirit of paradox and social critique ("with no ironic intention") seems to characterize all proclamations on the *Verjudung*, the "Jewification" of modern society, such as another of Marr's sources of inspiration, Richard Wagner[12], and one of the louder voices of French anti-Semitism, Edouard Droumond, who a few years after Marr exposed "The Jewish France".[13]

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7   Nipperdy and Rürup (1972, p. 151). See also Zimmermann (1986).
8   On the semantic history of the "Jewish Question", see Toury (1966). Toury's general conclusion was that "[t]he catchword *Judenfrage* emerged at the crossroads between old and new Jewry and between traditional Jew-hatred and new extreme antisemitism. In its anti-Jewish context it denied the feasibility of emancipation, or—where emancipation had been granted—its capability of solving the problem of Jewish integration" (p. 106).
9   Marx (1981, p. 374).
10 "The Patriarch of anti-Semitism" is how Marr reportedly called himself, see Zimmermann (1986, p. vii). For Marx's influence on Marr, see Marx (1981, p. 73).
11 Marr (1879).
12 Wagner (Wagner 1869, p. 12), writing on the *Verjudung* of modern art.
13 (Drumont 1886).

The title of Marr's book reveals, however, another basic feature of anti-Semitic discourse. The alleged "Triumph of Judaism" is over *Germanentum*, "Germanism". In other words, the paradigmatic rivalry and difference of Judaism, the paradigmatic difference that *constitutes* "Judaism", is not understood to be a difference vis-à-vis Christianity. Indeed, as Marr's subtitle asserts, anti-Semitism is the formulation and deployment of the Jewish Question "from a non-confessional standpoint". This is a crucial point. Anti-Semitism seems to fully subscribe to Marx's critique of Bauer, namely his critique of the religious-theological, the basically Christian framing of the Jewish Question. Indeed, one of the central solidarities between anti-Semitism and its anti-anti-Semitic critique is, as Yerushalmi pointed out, the assertion of a fundamental break and rupture, a decisive difference, between "modern" non-religious anti-Semitism and "traditional" religious anti-Judaism. Marr in fact sounds almost like quoting Marx when he declares that the Question of the Jews is not confessional but rather "a social-political question" (id., 41). That the phenomenon of Judaism is not primarily religious, and thus should not be primarily interpreted and not even thematized in "confessional" categories, is also what Adolph Hitler will later describe as a formative realization, namely that the Jews are "not German of a special confession, but a different people".[14] This proclaimed non-Christian perception of Judaism will manifest itself in the Nazis refusal to recognize Jewish converts to Christianity as non-Jews. In fact, anti-Semitism may be said to have gone even beyond Marx in de-Christianizing Judaism. Seemingly, anti-Semitic discourse departs from Christian theology so radically, that, unlike Marx, it no longer even *names* the object of its antagonism by the Christian category of "the Jews", but rather reverts to the scientifically sounding term "Semitism".

It is important to indicate the significance and potential fruitfulness of critiquing the dominance of Christian theological perception of the Jews, down to the very category "Jew". Indeed, as is often the case in the dynamics and history of discourse and thought, anti-Semitic discourse too, even in its worst, contains elements of enhanced clarity, in this case concerning the question of the Jews. Accordingly, be that in distorted forms and to sinister effects, it may strangely allow the appearance of a non-Christian image of the Jews, which would be closer to a Jewish self-understanding. Thus, the afore-mentioned Nazi non-recognition of Jews' conversion to Christianity as expunging their Jewishness, which, as I will immediately discuss, was motivated racially, and has been justly condemned as such, nonetheless has been de facto the dismissal of a Christian principle, i.e., faith, as defining Jewish being, which in this sense is consistent with historically dominant inner Jewish perspectives. Obviously, *not* believing in Christ has not been the foundational principle of historical Jewish self-understanding.

And yet, on a closer look, the contrast between anti-Semitism and theological anti-Judaism is less radical than both anti-Semitism and anti-anti-Semitism have it seem. On the level of naming, as already mentioned, the "Semitic" terminology has scarcely ever replaced the "Jewish". Interestingly, as Moshe Zimmermann showed, Marr's partner in founding the *Anti-Semiten-Liga*, the "League of Anti-Semites", in the same year that Marr's book was published, 1879, understood "Semitism" to designate a specifically Jewish mindset, expressed in Jewish *religion*, to the exclusion of non religious "Jewish Germans".[15] In this sense, the term "anti-Semitism", with its "appearance of scientificity", served to designate the spirit of Judaism, in contrast to Jewish being merely in the flesh. In other words, the term "anti-Semitism" may be even said to have had an *anti-racist* intention. The continuity with Christian anti-Judaism manifests itself, however, most clearly in the fact that anti-Semites, in contrast to Marx, never ceased from speaking of Jews. Whereas Marx, after the polemic with Bauer "On the Jewish Question", will scarcely ever again write about "Jews", will indeed replace the theological categories of Christians and Jews with socio-economico-political categories such as Bourgeois and Proletariats, Jews—and not "Semites"—are the constant center of anti-Semitism. Long before the Nazis

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14 (Hitler 1943).
15 Zimmermann (1986, p. 91).

prohibited the use of the term "anti-Semitism" for describing their anti-Jewish politics, already in 1907, one of the most canonic anti-Semitic texts of the time, the title of which tellingly asserting its canonicity in theological terms, *Anti-Semiten-Katechismus*, "the Catechism of the Anti-Semites", changed its title to *Handbuch der Judenfrage*, the "Handbook of the Jewish Question". The "Catechism" had been published by Theodor Fritsch since 1887, and from the very beginning defined "anti-Semites" as "anti-Jewish" (*Judengegner*).[16] 8 years earlier, the League of Anti-Semites, in its bylaws, defines its objective as "saving our German fatherland from the complete *Verjudung*".[17]

In fact, considered from the point of view of political epistemology, as Yerushalmi noted, "modern" anti-Semitism is intimately connected to "religious" anti-Judaism. In epistemo-political terms, so I wish to argue, its "anti-confessional" standpoint does not as radically break with theology as Marx did. Rather, it remains within the *same* discourse and only *performs* it from a different standpoint. This standpoint, so my basic claim, the standpoint or perspective of "political" anti-Semitism within the Christian theological discourse, has as its organizing concept the category of "race". Epistemo-politically, "race" stands in a fundamentally different kind of opposition to "faith" as "class". The anti-theological force of Marx's notion of "class" is the attempted localization of political being and agency within social history, in explicit polemics with the utopian unworldliness—the "illusion"—of Christian spirit as consummated in the bourgeois state. In contrast to this, the force of the notion of "race" is the attempted scientific *grounding* of the spirit's consummation in modern enlightenment. Race is the *negative* of Spirit: it is the negative a-historical ground of history, which is nothing but the history of race's negation in the gradual "progress of spiritualism".[18]

2. Racial Epistemology of the Invisible

It is indeed the concept and idea of "race" that shapes anti-Semitic politics, from Marr to Hitler. My claim is that "political" anti-Semitism draws the most fundamental consequences from this category. I already noted how for the anti-Semites the emancipation and assimilation, i.e., the *disappearance* of the Jews in the modern polity, constitutes the critical political event of modernity. I also noted how the anti-Semites, like Marx's "On the Jewish Question", see in this disappearance "the triumph of Judaism". Both Marx and the anti-Semites thus indeed interpret the disappearance of the Jews not as the dissolution but on the contrary as the full realization of Jewish being. This, however, in two fundamentally different ways. For Marx, "Judaism" is a socio-political form that "disappeared" only insofar as it has become all too visible, in the omnipresent form of the "moneymen". For the anti-Semites, in contrast, the disappearance of the Jews means literally that the Jews have become invisible, imperceptible in any social and cultural phenomena, and it is this very invisibility which constitutes the consummation of Jewish being, namely as a "Semitic race"[19]. Indeed, in contrast to Ernest Renan, for instance, who identifies the contemporary paradigm of Semitic race-spirit in Muslim Turkey, the most *visible* Other of Christian Europe,[20] for the anti-Semites, the paradigmatic phenomenon of the Semitism is the *invisibility* of the assimilated European Jews.

This fundamental anti-Semitic position could in fact be said to be more consistent with the category of "race" than Renan's. Race, as the negative of spirit and just like spirit, lies outside of history. It is the key to history inasmuch as history is the manifestation, expression and therefore phenomenon or trace of race. However, history remains mere phenomenon of race—it is not race itself. The force of the race category is precisely that it transcends history. Accordingly, inasmuch as historical, social, political, cultural phenomena can be traced back to race, race itself cannot be traced back to

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16 (Fritsch 1893).
17 des Vereins (1879).
18 Renan (1855): "[A] progress of spiritualism, because it is an effort to make men forget their earthly origin, and only keep the brotherhood resulting from their divine nature".
19 Marr (1879, p. 23).
20 Renan (1859).

such phenomena. It is rather its independence or difference from historical and cultural phenomena that constitutes the essence of race. It follows that inasmuch as history manifests race, race presents itself most purely in detachment from history, namely as non-manifest or *invisible* in the historical and cultural medium. It is in its historical invisibility that race is most present, as I indicated at the beginning in the *limpieza de sangre*.

There is here a conceptual dynamics at work, which is no doubt akin to the logic operative in certain (perhaps Gnostic) constellations of the theological relation between God and world, and in certain (perhaps Heideggerian) conceptions of the ontological relation between Being (*Seyn*) and beings (*Seiende*). Be that as it may, it is possible, based on the aforesaid fundamental conception of race outside of history, for which the crypto-Jew would be a premodern paradigm, to sketch a very general outline of something like anti-Semitic political epistemology. This epistemology, far from being naïve or unreflective, in fact possesses some central features of *critical* thought, namely—to recall Adorno and Horkheimer—of enlightenment, insofar as it is based on a profound doubt vis-à-vis phenomena and received knowledge. However, as its object, "race", presents itself in invisibility, anti-Semitic epistemology is not just suspicious in face of phenomena, it does not just look for better or more certain evidence, but looks beyond or before evidence—looks *against* evidence. Whereas, therefore, Renan posited race as the foundation of *science*—philology and ethnography—, anti-Semitic epistemology is pronouncedly *anti-scientific*.

In fact, the anti-phenomenal relation that anti-Semitism asserts to its object, Jewish being, as race, challenges the limits of what can be called "knowledge". A basic operation of anti-Semitic epistemology is indeed to discredit and consequently to deactivate all epistemic spaces, all *media*, in which its object may become visible, known. Anti-Semitism is anti-media. More specifically, it disqualifies the spaces of inter-subjective communication, where knowledge is generated as a collective process, as epistemo-polity, and within which the assimilation of Jews was to take place by way of *disappearance*. Anti-Semitism discredits the socio-political media in which Jews were to become invisible: intellectual discourse, literature, press, economy.[21] It does so by qualifying all these media as "Jewish", thus explaining the invisibility of the Jews by their omnipresence. In contrast to Marx, however, for whom the media—"society"—is ultimate reality, which means that bourgeois society *is* Jewish, for the anti-Semites "Jewish" media is a *lie*, which conceals reality, i.e., the real, unassimilated and unassimilable Jewish race.

I once again wish to underline the conceptual solidarity or at least commensurability that this anti-Semitic epistemology, in contrast to the Marxist one, entertains with religious discourse, insofar as it revolves around unworldly faith. There is a statement of Hitler that provides a radical formulation of this situation, when he writes about the Jews, that "their entire existence is already built on one big lie, namely that what they are is a religious congregation, while [in fact] it is a race"[22]. Thus, socio-political media provides the phenomenal space for the apparition of Jewish assimilation, which means the apparition of Jewish invisibility in the socio-political sphere, according to which Jewish being is a non-political existence, a "religious congregation" of faith. This religious invisibility, however, would be a lie, *the* lie: a false invisibility that conceals a true invisibility, namely that of race. Race is the invisible behind the invisible, a real invisible concealed by a fake invisible.

I will shortly discuss the political implications of this epistemology of double invisibility. However, first I wish to indicate, next to its negative, anti-medial aspect, also its positive aspect, whereby anti-Semitism *does* assert knowledge of Jews. This knowledge can only be of course *immediate* knowledge, a highly paradoxical notion, which contains all the epistemological tensions and ambivalences animating the relations between evidence and presence and in fact seems to abolish the fundamental condition of the knowledge relation. Be that as it may, anti-Semitic discourse articulates

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[21] See Fritsch (Fritsch 1893, pp. 17–18); Drumont (Drumont 1886, p. xv); Dühring (Dühring 1892, pp. 13, 55).
[22] Hitler (Hitler 1943, p. 253).

itself in fact most frequently in an epistemically critical and reflective manner, its negation of media always entailing the invocation of immediate knowledge or presence, which is most frequently the "instinct". "Instinct" is the liminal epistemic faculty, the proto-cognitive dimension, in which "race" is epistemically operative. "Instinct" is accordingly the faculty by which anti-Semitism asserts immediate relation to and knowledge of Jewish racial being. It is noteworthy how the immediacy of instinct, which explicitly operates as subversive to socio-political media and establishment, and in fact can only possess racial generality, i.e., the generality of organic species, that can only operate in the *individual*, is nonetheless embodied in anti-Semitic discourse as a socio-political, collective figure: "the people".

In contrast to and as countermeasure against the press and literature that corrupt the intellectual, the educated, the cultivated, *gebildete* mind, the philosopher Eugen Dühring, for grounding his view on "The Jewish Question as a Question of Racial Detriment [*Racenschändlichkeit*] for the Existence, Morals and Culture of the Peoples" (1880), thus invoked the "natural instincts and feeling" and the "immediate impressions" of "the low people and the common citizen".[23] Similarly, the historian Heinrich von Treitschke, summoned "the instinct of the masses", the alleged generator of popular anti-Semitism, as the truth-sensor for his famous pronouncement of the same anti-Semitic year of 1879 that "the Jews are our misfortune!"[24] In France too, forremoving the veil of Jewish press and literature, and seeing *the Jewish* France, Drumond wrote, "*C'est dans la rue que je vous propose de regarder*", "I suggest that you look at the street", using "the patriot's common sense".[25] Another one of Marr's sources of inspiration, Richard Wagner, in his *Judentum in der Musik* (1850), already appealed to the "instinct-like", "natural" and "unconscious sensation, which emerges in the people as innermost repulsion against the Jewish essence".[26] Whereas Wagner went ahead to explore this "unconscious sensation" of repulsion in the auditory realm, "in music", it is rather olfactory sensation, "smell", that will reveal to young Hitler the essence of Jews: "I often grew sick to my stomach from the smell of these caftan wearers"[27].

It is illustrative to indicate how this radical anti-scientific epistemology of race related more specifically to the realm of *language*, which, based on the traditional and common conception of "language as expression of the soul", was for Renan the primary medium of race's "manifestation" and consequently the primary medium for his *philological* race science.[28] Language has in fact been one of the most important media of Jewish assimilation. It is as German, French writers that the specifically Jewish being of Jewish authors could disappear, concretely accomplishing Renan's "progress of spiritualism". It is thus that language has become one of the important fronts of anti-Semitism. It is of course a highly complex front, since, anti-Semitism itself operating in language, it could not so simply discredit this medium as "Jewish". Accordingly, discussion on language has given rise to radicalized expression of anti-Semitism's race epistemology, in which, as stated above, the expression or manifestation of race (language) is *eo ipso* the concealment of race.

It is against this concealment, this pseudo-assimilation that conceals crypto-difference, that Wagner wrote on "The Jews in Music". According to him, it is indeed not on the manifest or visible level of language, but rather on the latent, subliminal, "unconscious" level that the essence of language would lie. If language constitutes a "historical communality", nonetheless "only he who grew up unconsciously in this communality also takes part in its creation".[29] Against all appearance, therefore, the Jew, who has been "standing outside of this communality", necessarily speaks "modern European languages" always "as a foreigner" (id. 14), a radical foreignness that Wagner extends by the power of metaphor to "[o]ur entire European civilization and art", which "remained for the Jews

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[23] Dühring (Dühring 1892, pp. 3, 55).
[24] von Treitschke (1879, pp. 572, 575).
[25] Drumont (Drumont 1886, p. xx).
[26] Wagner (Wagner 1869, pp. 9–11).
[27] Hitler (Hitler 1943, p. 51).
[28] Renan (1855, p. 101). For a broader discussion on the interplay between modern science of language and modern science of race, see Olender (1989); see also Hutton (1999).
[29] Wagner (Wagner 1869, p. 15).

a foreign language" (id. 15). Echoing native or mother tongue ideologies, such as Schleiermacher's ("one [produces originally] only in one's mother tongue"[30]), Wagner thus proclaims that the foreigner, the Jew, may only imitate or reproduce, never "really speak, make poems or create works of art" (id.). The evidence for this latent foreignness, which Wagner paradoxically still insists on providing, he thus locates not in the semantics of language, but, as already noted above, in language as sensation, as sound. It is in the *music* of language, in *singing* that Wagner identifies "the liveliest and irrefutably truest expression of the person's essential sensation" (id. 17). Jewish foreignness would manifest itself acoustically in the "Semitic pronunciation", i.e., "the hissing, shrilling, humming and flawed sound expression" (id. 15).

This last paradoxical piece of evidence for the invisible Jewish foreignness behind the invisible Jewish sameness in language is rendered unnecessary and in fact impossible by the ever radicalizing discourse of Hitler, who draws the last consequences from the understanding of language as "expression" of thought: "A person can simply change the language, i.e., he can use a different language; in the new language, however, he will express the old thoughts; his inner essence will not change".[31] Indeed, race, the "inner essence", is only expressed in and manifested by language, but *is* not language. Language still belongs to media, to society, to history—to exteriority, or in Lutheran terms, to "works". It is indeed at this point that the intimacy of race and spirit, race and *pistis*, becomes visible, as "race spirit" is embodied in one phenomenon of "inner essence"—the essence, the spirit, the liquid of life: "blood".[32] "Race does not lie in language, but only in blood, something that no one knows better than the Jew, who in fact places only very little value on preserving his language, and rather all value on keeping his blood pure". (id., 342).

3. The Secret Race State

I will shortly discuss this anti-Semitic motif of identifying the Jew as the paradigm of race, an identification that may seem contradictory in Hitler's race politics. Before that, however, I wish to point at the latter's politically crucial conclusion regarding language, which in fact stands in direct opposition to Renanian philology. If for Renan's science language manifests race, for Hitler—who on this point, as I indicated, is more consistent with the logic of race—language *conceals* race. "The language of the Jew", he writes, "is for him not the means to express his thoughts, but the means to conceal them. Speaking French, he thinks Jewish." (id., 337). This is the logic that will later guide the "12 Theses Against the Un-German Spirit", a flyer formulating the platform of the Nazi students' *Aktion* that culminated in the book burnings of May 1933, in demanding that "Jewish works shall be published in the Hebrew language. If they are published in German, they shall be designated as translations".[33]

In fact, the anti-epistemic epistemology of anti-Semitism, the epistemology of double invisibility, carries inherent political implications, is *eo ipso* political epistemology. It is after all for a certain *politics* that ant-Semitism has primarily become the name. I already indicated the formally similar assertions of both Marx and the anti-Semites about shifting the Jewish Question from religion to politics, and their formally similar underlying anti-religious or anti-Christian critique. For Marx, this initially meant re-interpreting Jewish particularity as the specificity of a certain socio-political practice, i.e., egoism, which subsequently meant abandoning "Jews" as a political category and politically significant historical agent altogether. Anti-Semitism, in contrast, turns the de-christianized Jews into a paradigm of politics—a paradigm of a people, a paradigm of a state. Indeed, one of the fundamental operations of anti-Semitic discourse has been to *assert* the political essence of Judaism

30 "[J]eder [producireursprünglich] nur in seiner Muttersprache"; see ibid., 60. *Über die verschiedenenMethoden des Übersetzens* ("On the Various Methods of Translating"), written in 1813, Störig (1963).
31 Hitler (Hitler 1943, p. 342)
32 Anidjar (2014, p. viii).
33 See Treß (2003, 2009).

against its religious interpretation. Wilhelm Marr's basic observation from his "non-confessional standpoint" was: "The Jewish 'confession' was nothing more than the statutes of a people".[34] Judaism is not a religion but "the particular Jewish state" (id., 9). I already mentioned Hitler's constitutive realization that Jews are "not German of a special confession, but a different people [*ein Volk fürsich*]".[35] In support for this claim he refers, among others, as Eichmann will too in Jerusalem, to Zionism[36], and to the "factual" nature of the Talmud: "In fact, the Talmud too is not a book of preparation for the hereafter, but only for practical and tolerable life in this world".[37]

Visible here is the assertion of "the people" *against* "confession": the Jews are not confession *but* a people; the Talmud is not about the hereafter *but* about this world. I already indicated how this allegedly anti-Christian position is in fact an anti-confessional position within the confessional discourse: it asserts the political as the non-confessional versus the confessional, "the people" versus faith. The political, "the people", thus draws its meaning from faith, from the "hereafter", i.e., as the *negative* thereof, which is, as I discussed above, "race". The Talmud is not about the hereafter, but about collective life in this world, namely, Hitler explains, it provides "instructions for ensuring the purity of blood of the Jewry [*Judentum*]". (id.) "Not ... but". This is the structure of the formally critical quality of anti-Semitic discourse, *unveiling* truth behind seeming. For understanding the political implications of this epistemic claim it is crucial to recall the paradox of unveiling race behind confession, i.e., a true invisible behind a seeming invisible, which is the underlying paradox of crypto-Judaism. It is by virtue of this logic that anti-Semitism considers assimilated, i.e., invisible Jews as the most accomplished form of the Jewish polity, an invisible state that would constitute—rather than Renan's Turkey—the most accomplished form of race state.

The political significance of this conception becomes more visible in the—essentially paradoxical—anti-Semitic image or imagination of this invisible Jewish polity. Once again, the comparison with Marx is illustrative. Marx interprets the disappearance of the Jews, Bauer's particularistic "chosen people", in the process of emancipation as the universalization of Jewish "egoism", such that the new Jewish figure is bourgeois society or the common "moneymen". Anti-Semitic discourse, in contrast, interprets the disappearance of the Jews in the imagery of *conspiracy*. Jewish disappearance signifies Jewish triumph not because Jewish politics has become universally visible, but, on the contrary, because Jewish particularistic politics has become so powerful as to control all media, all "conditions of possible experience", and thus to make itself invisible, which is the consummation of race politics.

Herein lies the suggestive power of what will become the canonic document of 20th century anti-Semitism, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, or as titled in the Marsden translation, *The Protocols of the Meetings of the Learned Elders of Zion*.[38] In the present context, where the theo-political figure of crypto-Judaism is posited as an epistemo-political paradigm for anti-Semitism, it is remarkable how the main motifs of the "Jewish conspiracy" theory are already present in 15th–16th century Iberia, as described by Yerushalmi. Yerushalmi describes the "historical irony"[39] in that precisely the fulfilling of the Christian hope of Jewish conversion (assimilation) generated the fear of the "inner enemy" (id.), which in some instances explicitly produced narratives concerning the "existence of an international Jewish plot that almost anticipates the modern *Protocols of the Sages of Zion*" (id., 15).

"The Protocols" are in fact a document and not a text. They are an artifact, a piece of evidence that *presents* the invisible. Their exact content is less significant than their material existence, which

34 Marr (1879, p. 20).
35 Hitler (Hitler 1943, p. 60).
36 Id., pp. 60, 356. For Eichmann, see Arendt (Arendt 2006, pp. 40–41).
37 Hitler (Hitler 1943, p. 336).
38 *The Protocols of the Meetings of the Learned Elders of Zion*, with preface and explanatory notes, translated from the Russian text by Victor E. Marsden, formerly Russian Correspondent of "The Morning Post", 1934 (no place of publication and publisher specified).
39 Yerushalmi and Carnaud (1993, p. 14).

attests to the existence and actual presence (the "meetings") of the invisible Jewish polity, and in fact not just attests to it, but re-presents it, reenacts the presence of the Jewish state, in the very clear and concentrated image of the "Elders of Zion", and so *embodies* the disappearing Jews. The Protocols speak in the first person plural of the "we"—they raise the claim to be read as a recording of the *authentic* Jewish voice.

This is why the main question raised by the Protocols concerns not their veracity, but their *authenticity*. This question redeploys the various paradoxes of evidenced invisibility: the authenticity of the Protocols means they make visible the invisible *as invisible*, whose thus evidenced invisibility would be the proof for its omnipotence and omnipresence. The connection of power and invisibility is a political precept confessed to by the Protocols "themselves", stating as their main principle: "Force and Make-Believe. Only force conquers in political affairs, especially if it be concealed in the talents essential to statesmen." (id., 147). Under these conditions, any positive evidence of Jewish conspiracy would *eo ipso* constitute evidence *against* its power. Thus, evidence is provided paradoxically rather by the manifest *opposition* to it, i.e., by anti-Semitism, to which in "the Protocols" the "Elders of Zion" virtually take credit: "Nowadays, if any States raise a protest against us it is only *pro forma*, at our discretion and by our discretion, for *their anti-Semitism is indispensable to us for the management of our lesser brethren*." (id., 169). Anti-Semitism itself would thus be the ultimate living evidence for the Jewish conspiracy, which is so powerful as to generate the appearance of anti-Jewish reality. Similarly, the authenticity of the Protocols is structurally proven by everything that *speaks against it*. Jewish authorship is evidenced by the lack of evidence of Jewish authorship, as Henry Ford's *The International Jew* (1920) argued: "If these documents were the forgeries which Jewish apologists claim them to be, the forgers would probably have taken pains to make Jewish authorship so clear that their anti-Semitic purpose could easily have been detected."[40] Indeed, Jewish authorship is proven by the very *denial* of Jewish authorship, as the argument goes: "The claim of the Jews that the Protocols are forgeries is in itself an admission of their genuineness."[41]

There is still much to be asked about the basic epistemo-political conception and presuppositions that underlie the effectiveness of the notion and image of Jewish politics as "world conspiracy". In the framework of this explicitly *epistemic* study of anti-Semitism, i.e., the study of anti-Semitism as a phenomenon or constellation of *knowledge*, namely of a certain reflective relation to an object, "Jews", it would be important to interrogate more closely how "the Protocols" and their anti-Semitic readings more or less explicitly refer to and represent, and thus constitute a certain *perception* of actual, *self*-affirming political and cultural performances of "the Jewish". One such obvious event was the First Zionist Congress of 1897, which the Marsden translation provides as the answer to the question, "When did the Meetings take place and by whom were the Protocols promulgated?".[42] There is much paradox in pointing at the Zionist Congress as the location of Jewish world conspiracy, of course, precisely due to the *patent* nature of the Zionist Congress: both its own constitutive visibility as a public event and the specific visibility it claimed for the Jews, i.e., a formally distinguished and separate state. In the logic of crypto- Judaism, however, the Zionist Congress, very much like *The Protocols* themselves, was not so much a text as a *document*, which demonstrated the existence, behind or beyond the visible event, of an invisible Jewish society, a secret, *international* Jewish polity, whose paradigm and *telos* is not really a nation-state, but a world-state, a *cosmo-polis*.

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[40] Ford (1920). The publication states no author, place of publication and publisher specified, and has in its turn raised an authorship dispute resembling the one pertaining to the Protocols. See Woeste (2012); see also Wallace (2003).

[41] As stated in the introduction to Marsden's translation, *op. cit.* p. 137. The text nonetheless continues to explain the argument by criticizing the forgery allegations of evading answer to "the facts": "for they *never attempt to answer the facts* corresponding to the *threats* which the Protocols contain, and, indeed, the correspondence between the prophecy and the fulfillment is too glaring to be set aside or obscured." (*Id.*). Hitler, who radically asserts the epistemo-political power of paradox, typically uses the openly and intentionally paradoxical formulation: "[The Protocols] are based on a forgery, the 'Frankfurter Zeitung' moans every week to the world: the best proof that they are authentic". (*The Protocols*, 337).

[42] *The Protocols*, 137.

In this sense, *The Protocols* may be more cogently considered as an anti-Semitic perception or imagination *of* the Talmud.　The Talmudic texts could indeed be described and read as minutes, transcripts or "protocols" of discussions between ancient Jewish scholars, "learned elders". These meetings, not only the ones of late antiquity and middle ages, but also in contemporary rabbinic academies, in contrast to Zionist Congresses, have in fact remained invisible for the European public. The only evidence for their existence is their protocols, the Talmud.　From the perspective of my anti-anti-anti-Semitic investigation, it is noteworthy to what extent in fact the Talmud, rarely mentioned by anti-anti-Semitic authors, plays a significant role in anti-Semitic texts.[43] Much more than Zionist discourse, Talmudic discourse in fact contains innumerable elements of a *universal* vision, which may be very reasonably characterized as worldly-political rather than unworldly-religious. An unlikely designation for the Zionist nation-state paradigm, "world rule" could be used much more sensibly for describing the proclaimed Talmudic adhesion to the project of *ribonoshelolam*, "The Sovereign of the World".

In the anti-Semitic representation of the Talmud the universal is subjugated to the particular: the main point made by all anti-Semitic accounts is the Talmudic political and legal, i.e., *normative* distinction between Jews and non-Jews. It has been of course a traditional anti-Jewish trope, as visible in Kant for instance, to criticize Judaism for being basically a *nomos*—law, institution and culture—of particularism.[44] The unique feature of anti-Semitism seems to be the notion that this particularistic *nomos* is nothing but the expression of a particularistic *physis*, namely race. Jewish law would be the expression of the Semitic race spirit, which is so to speak the spiritual incarnation of race. The primary epistemological feature of this *nomos* is that it is—like race—hidden beneath the surface of historical phenomena: it is a secret racial law of an invisible race state that is most powerful when nowhere to be seen.

In these epistemo-political conditions, the Talmudic or Jewish universal claim can only be interpreted as a Jewish conspiracy for world domination, the basic principle of which is Jewish *exploitation* of non-Jews. Here lies the sense of acute menace arising from the anti-Semitic imagination of the invisible Jewish polity and the modern event or process of *Verjudung*. In political terminology, the Jews are imagined, in contrast to Muslims, the *external* enemy, as the *internal* enemy[45], which always means a secret, invisible and hidden enemy, an enemy that does not *look like* an enemy, but rather as a friend or better—that has no visible distinction at all. This internal political rivalry is paradigmatically described as "a state within the state", an inner state within the state that exploits the state and does so under the false pretense of being a religion. As Marr put it: "[t]he Jewish confession was nothing more than the statutes of a people, which constitutes a state within the state and this by-state or counter-state [*Nebenstaat, resp. Gegenstaat*] demanded very specific material advantages for its members".[46] Emancipation would consequently mean admitting the enemies of the state to be its citizens and potential *rulers*, "equal political participation in legislation and administration of the very state they theocratically negate" (Id., 21), which automatically evokes the image of political suicide.

The more extreme anti-Semitic language, asserting more explicitly and radically the logos of race, does not describe the invisible Jewish state in political terms but in biological terms.　The internal

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43　There is in fact a motif of "exposing" the Talmud as the secret, anti-Christian and later anti-non-Jews book of the Jews, which operates as a constitutive act of modern anti-Judaism and later anti-Semitism. The history and development of this motif can be traced, in German literature, from Johann Andreas Eisenmenger's *Entdecktes Judentum* ("Judaism Revealed") of 1700, exposing Jews' contempt of Christianity as stated in their "own books", "so far completely or partly unknown among the Christians", to the 1893 edition (Dresden, Otto Brander), which present itself as "literal translation of the most important passages of the Talmud and other Hebrew-rabbinic literature, to a large extent still completely unknown to the Christians", passing through Rohling (1871), and featuring in works such Fritsch's *Anti-Semiten-Katechismus* (12ff.) and Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (336).

44　(Kant 2003): "Jewish faith, in its original setting, is a compendium (Inbegriff) of mere (bloß) statutory laws, on which a state constitution was founded".

45　Cf. Anidjar (2003).

46　Marr (1879, p. 20).

malignant Jewish agent is not a state nor *enemy* but "a foreign element"[47] or "a parasite"[48], namely an agent whose harmfulness immediately arises from its foreignness to the organic system, something for which Hitler had many names, such as "poison", "spiritual pestilence", "germ carriers".[49] The inner destruction that they signify is not death by suicide, but death by disease. It is noteworthy that the biological semantics detaches its object—and thus itself—from any moral or more generally from any *normative* aspects. The phenomena it describes are not in the order of the political but in the order of the natural. The death and destruction associated with Jewish emancipation arise in a process that involves no real guilt or responsibility, but is moved by organic necessity. In this sense, the Jews are not even real agents or causes, but an epiphenomenon of the inner downfall, parasites not of life, but of death: "like maggot in the rotting flesh".[50]

The powerfulness of these strong images, namely what makes them strong *images*, what constitutes and intensifies their specific operation of making visible, lies no doubt in their insistence not only on the death of the body, but on the body of death, on the body as death. The flesh appears there not as the matter or substrate of spirit and form, not quite as *body*, but as the formless, decaying biomass, which above all provokes disgust and horror. Disgust is the basic relation to the invisible not as the unseen visible, such as the Platonic ideas, which, invisible to the sensual eye, are nonetheless the very intellectual *forms* of all visibility, and so shine forth in beauty.[51] Disgust, nausea, repulsion, is the relation to the invisible in the mode of formlessness, or the invisible as de-formed, monstrous, *ugly*—it not only evades but repulses the eye, it repulses the *will* to see. Jews, the racial being, embody the ugliness of the invisible real, the appalling flesh and blood beneath the skin of appearance. The horror of their image arises from their essential concealedness. The less they are seen the more horrific their image gets. Like Baudelaire's devil, their finest trick was to convince the world, by "the progress of enlightenment", that they did not exist.[52] Or as Hitler put it: "It is one of the most ingenious tricks that were ever devised, to make [the Jewish racial] State sail under the flag of 'religion'."[53] Jewish politics of race is at its peak when the Jew—together with the Marxists—*denies* race: "While he seems to overflow of 'enlightenment', 'progress', 'freedom', 'humanity' etc., he himself exercises the strongest locking-up of his race [. . .]. To mask his activity and lull his victims; however, he talks more and more of the equality of all men without regard to race and color." (id., 346; 69).

4. Kampf

The anti-Semitic *struggle* against the Jews, an agenda that immediately arises from the anti-Semitic representation of the Jews and that becomes ever more urgent as Jews continue to assimilate and disappear, thus consists initially and importantly in a multifaceted operation of *discerning* and rendering the Jews *visible*. The Jews must be displayed as the invisible being that is concealed by the invisible being they claim and seem to be: race and not confession. Against Jewish denial of race, anti-Semitism proclaims and *asserts* race, is in this sense *racist*. This seems to go completely against something like Renan's "progress of spiritualization", in which, for the sake of the nation, race is to be *forgotten*.[54] In this Christianist modern logic, race is posited as the sacrifice demanded by spirit, which is seemingly

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47   Wagner (Wagner 1869, p. 31).
48   Dühring (Dühring 1892, p. 8); Hitler (Hitler 1943, p. 334).
49   Hitler (Hitler 1943, p. 62).
50   Fritsch (Fritsch 1893, p. 155); Hitler (Hitler 1943, p. 61); see already Wagner: "the flesh dissolves in the swarming multiplicity of worms" (idem, *Juden*, 31).
51   Plato, *Phaedrus* 250d, as discussed by (Heidegger 1996).
52   Baudelaire (1869), where the devil tells that the only moment whenhewasconcerned about his power waswhenheheard a preachershouting: "Mes chers frères, n'oubliez jamais, quand vous entendrez vanter le progrès des lumières, que la plus belle des ruses du diable est de vous persuader qu'il n'existe pas!".
53   Hitler (Hitler 1943, p. 165). For a discussion of affinities between Baudlaire and Hitler on the question of "evil", see Hill (2006).
54   Renan (1882).

the opposite of racist politics, i.e., the justification of political power on the basis of race, a fundamental feature of all *political* anti-Semitism and a basic law of Nazism.

This is not the place for a thorough analysis of Hitler's race theory, but *Mein Kampf* no doubt asserts race, i.e., the "drive of self-preservation of the race", as the basic principle of politics. "The drive of preservation of the species is the first cause for the formation of human communities" (id., 165); "all events of world history are only the manifestation of the self-preservation drive of the race" (id., 324). Like Marx's "class", Hitler's "race" is the collective agent of history; Marxist history is animated by class struggle, Hitler's by race struggle. However, whereas the *telos* of Marx's history, the end of class struggle, is to end class, like Renan's history works to end race, Hitler's race struggle does not work to end race, but rather to *preserve* race. Race struggle is the "means for promoting the health and force of resistance of the species" (id., 315). Indeed, forgetting race, which for Renan is the condition for the rise and very event of the modern nation, is proclaimed by Hitler to be the cause for the downfall of all great cultures in history (id., 316). It is in properly theological terms that he preaches the principle of race: "The sin against blood and race is the original sin of this world and the end of humanity that commits it" (id., 272).

This terminology, however, simultaneously asserts and undermines the anti-religiosity of the race principle. The proximity to theology is in fact greater than it first seems. It shows itself most clearly in Hitler's and general anti-Semitic narrative of the actual history of race struggle, as articulated most fundamentally and radically by the struggle between Aryans and Semites. As is the case in all race theory, its theology manifests itself in its teleology and eschatology. Indeed, Aryans and Semites are not just two competing races, like all races. Rather, they represent different moments or stages in the principle of race, and thus provide the basic articulation of the logic and *telos* of race as the principle of human history. The Aryan race stands for the end of this history as culture and civilization, is thus the *superior* race, the actual paradigm of humanity. According to Hitler, human culture is "almost exclusively the creative product of the Aryan", such that "he alone was the founder of superior humanity in general, and is thus the paradigm of what we understand by the word 'man'" (id., 317). What precise quality does the Aryan race posses, which qualifies it for culture? The foundation of superior humanity, of "culture", is "the capacity to form a broader commonwealth [*Gemeinwesen*]", namely beyond the natural family, which requires "the readiness to put back purely personal interests" (id., 325). Culture demands, so Hitler, a "will to sacrifice" (id.), a sense of "duty", or "idealism" (id. 327), which means the will to transcend self-preservation and therewith to transcend race. The Aryan, superior race of culture, would be the race that transcends race, the idealistic, spiritual race.

Now, "the most radical opposition to the Aryan is the Jew" (id. 329). In contrast to the spiritual Aryan race-spirit stands the racial Semitic race-spirit, which for Hitler was embodied by the Jews. The Jews therefore paradoxically appear as the paradigm of race politics, the politics based on "self-preservation drive": "Hardly any people in the world have a more developed self-preservation drive than the so-called chosen ones. The best evidence for this should be already provided by the simple fact of the mere existence of this race." (id.) "What an infinitely tenacious will to life, to preserve the species arises from these facts!" (id.), Hitler wrote in admiration. The problem of the Jews is that they are too much race, namely lack "the most essential condition for a people of culture, the idealistic mentality", the "will to sacrifice" (id., 330).

Accordingly, in *Mein Kampf*, Hitler can describe his "struggle" in the name of and for the Aryan race not just as a mere biological, natural necessity, but as a historical event of a religious mission: "What we have to fight for is securing the existence and multiplication of our race and our people, nurturing our children and maintaining the purity of blood, the freedom and independence of our fatherland, so that our people may grow to fulfill the mission that it too was allotted by the creator of the universe." (id., 234). The casual "too", *auch*, is dramatic here. It shows how easily and conveniently, in what familiar and obvious way, the bluntest race discourse draws on the tradition of theology. The theological notion of a collective "mission", a collective chosenness, election and calling, a collective

historical pre-destination and destiny, provides the epistemo-political meaning of the category "race". The spirit of race, race-spirit, is a divine calling. The "too" invokes of course the other, more well-known, *exemplary* chosen people, the Jews, Israel in the flesh, the race of Israel. The chosen race of Israel serves as the paradigm for the chosen German race—but not only as paradigm: both as a proto-type and as adversary, namely as an inferior version of itself. Aryan Israel is chosen precisely to fight Jewish Israel: "And so I believe today to act as intended by the almighty creator: by fending off the Jews, I fight for the work of the Lord." (id., 70). Anti-Semitism thus shows itself to be a modern operation of supersession and *Aufhebung*—of the race of Israel in flesh by the race of Israel in spirit.

5. Final Conversion

It is in accordance with this political epistemology that the anti-Semitic *agenda*, its plan of action, its operative *anti*, namely its anti-Jewish war, has taken its shape, eventually amounting to what will be called the "Final Solution" of the Jewish Question, and later the Destruction of the Jews, the Holocaust or the Shoah. I am aware of the temptation and risk of reading history from Auschwitz backward—but there is also a risk in avoiding such a reading, which is the risk of avoiding history, namely as a dimension where ideas become real and reality visible, i.e., history as a dimension of positive political epistemology. Of course, it is only to a very limited extent that Hitler's text can be considered as *theory*: not only due to the strong anti-scientific, anti-epistemic intentionality of anti-Semitism, and not only due to the ensuing powerfully operative, militant and *sermonic* nature of anti-Semitic discourse, pushed to extremes in Hitler's text and speeches. Hitler's text is of course more than that: it is one of the closest things to a universally accessible blueprint and conceptual matrix for the actual politics carried out by both Nazi German state and society. It is thus a manifest epistemo-political location, a strong link between a certain, central and even constitutive modern political epistemology, as I tried to present it in the basic paradox of crypto-Judaism, and a paradigmatic catastrophe of modern politics.

What was conceived, planned, organized, coordinated and carried out on a world scale as "The Final Solution of the Jewish Question" was directly conditioned through the interrelated conceptions and perceptions that were named "The Jewish Question" or "The Question of the Jews", the conception and perception of the Jews as the Question. A fundamental anti-anti-Semitic tendency endeavors to neutralize the epistemic nature of anti-Semitism by denying its Jewish Question any epistemic relation to the Jews—anti-Semitism would constitute no knowledge, neither bad nor good knowledge, *of* Jews. The Jewish Question would have nothing to do with the Jews. This tendency is at least one significant motivation for the very current use of the term "anti-Semitism", a modern phenomenon, which would be essentially separated from traditional, religious "anti-Judaism", which, presumably, *would* know about Jews. Against this anti-anti-Semitic tendency, my analysis shows that the anti-Semitic Jewish Question discourse: first, constitutes a reaction to, and thus a perspective on and a *perception* of the defining modern Jewish event, i.e., the so-called "emancipation"; and second, *conceptually* draws, through race discourse, from the theological tradition. Looking closer at this perceptual and conceptual anti-Semitic knowledge of Jews, I do however concede to anti-anti-Semitism that anti-Semitic knowledge of Jews is epistemologically *negative*, which *eo ipso* also invokes its similarity to anti-anti-Semitic knowledge of Jews. Whereas the paradigmatic anti-anti-Semitic perception of Jews is the negative perception of the Jew "flesh and blood", a Jew without any concept, form and figure, a Jew behind the "Jew", the anti-Semitic perception of the Jews is the double negative of the invisible race behind the invisible confession, the crypto-Jew.

The Final Solution of the anti-Semitic Jewish Question, namely the question, problem or issue posed by the Jews to the modern polity as a different political entity or a different political being, could have been neither conversion nor assimilation. Conversion and assimilation were rather the problem, since it is precisely by disappearance that the invisible comes into being. The less Jewish Jews seemed, the Jewisher they were. The race state, a human base state, prehistorical origin of history, re-emerged from beneath the cover of all its historical manifestations, purely present in its invisible glory. Transcending this origin, this root and race, progressing from race to spirit, to nation,

to culture, namely consummating modernity by solving once and for all the question of the Jews, can no longer take place in the dimension of socio-historical phenomena, but must proceed at the root itself, in the dimension of real being, of the individual "flesh and blood". The ultimate conversion from race to spirit is not the disappearance but the extinction of race, the termination of its racial being, its organic life. The final conversion of the Jews into modernity, as the ultimate moment in the European "progress of spiritualization", was to be their conversion from life to death, their physical, bodily, individual extermination. It is through a striking fidelity to this theo-political epistemology that the official post-WII memory of Auschwitz, i.e., its existence as anti-anti-Semitic state knowledge, will in fact conceive and make sense of it by the category of ultimate sacrifice, will name and know it to be *The Holocaust*.

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