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Antisemitism in Spain: A Religion-Based Anti-Judaism?

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Antisemitism in Spain: A Religion-Based Anti-Judaism?¹

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The Spanish writer Antonio Gala was cited in the Spanish newspaper *El Mundo* on 4 June 2012 with the following observation: “Maybe here, in Spain, there was never a religious persecution, but [rather] one motivated by the hatred accumulated by the popular classes for a long time. Jewish people [i]s right, but they bring everybody else against them”.³

Two years earlier, on 9 September 2010, in *El País* the title of an article about a survey on antisemitism conducted by the *Casa Sefarad-Israel* had stated that “[o]ne third of the Spanish population has a negative opinion about Jews”.⁴ The survey had showed that 35% of the interviewees rejected Jews.⁵

The two examples underline that antisemitism is indeed an issue in contemporary Spain. They also illustrate some important aspects of the discussion about this phenomenon. While the first quotation stands for the persistence of anti-Judaic stereotypes in the unconscious, the second example shows a growing awareness of what can be called modern antisemitism in Spain. When analysing the situation in Spain, it has been common to distinguish between the racist ideology of antisemitism on the one hand, and anti-Judaism as a result of the strong influence of the Catholic religion and tradition on the other.⁶ This differentiation is often accompanied by the argument that antisemitism in Spain was never a strong politically organized movement, but rather that religiously motivated anti-Judaic stereotypes and clichés have survived to the present day within the society and within popular culture.⁷

Besides the strong influence of the Catholic Church, another peculiarity in Spain is the virtual absence of Jews after their expulsion in the 15th century until at least the 19th century. Authors like Manfred Böcker therefore argue that the development of antisemitism in Spain cannot be explained by contacts or conflicts with real Jews; instead, it has to be understood as “antisemitism without Jews”.⁸

¹ This article is based on a lecture I held at the Conference „Antisemitism in Europe today: The Phenomena, the Conflicts“ on 8/9 November 2013 in Berlin.

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³ Cited in Informe sobre el antisemitismo en España durante el año 2012, ed. by Observatorio de Antisemitismo, Madrid 2013, p. 16.

⁴ “Un tercio de los españoles tiene una mala opinión de los judíos”, in *El País*, 9 September 2010.

⁵ Casa Sefarad-Israel: Estudio sobre antisemitismo en España. Informe de resultados, Madrid 2010, p. 10.

⁶ See, for example, the remark of Federico Raurell quoted in “Spain suffered anti-Judaism not antisemitism”, in *Jewish Chronicle*, 4/993, 1. 1.1965, p. 17.

⁷ See for example: Böcker, Manfred: *Antisemitismus ohne Juden. Die Zweite Republik, die antirepublikanische Rechte und die Juden. Spanien 1931 bis 1936*, Frankfurt a.M. 2000 (Hispano-Americana, Vol. 23); Álvarez Chillida, Gonzalo; Izquierdo Benito, Ricardo (Eds.): *El Antisemitismo en España*, Cuenca 2007 (Humanidades 90).

⁸ See Böcker: *Antisemitismus ohne Juden*. This is also true for other Catholic countries, see Blaschke, Olaf; Mattioli, Aram (Eds.): “Katholischer Antisemitismus im 19. Jahrhundert”. *Ursachen und Traditionen im internationalen Vergleich*, Zürich 2000.

Despite the growing awareness expressed in the publication of different surveys on antisemitism in Spanish society during the last years,⁹ despite the creation of the website *Observatorio de Antisemitismo*¹⁰ and – more recently – despite the foundation of the *Instituto Holocausto y Antisemitismo* within the *Casa Sefarad-Israel* (now called *Centro Sefarad-Israel*),¹¹ there has still been little research done on modern antisemitism in Spain, especially when it comes to the second half of the 20th century. The already mentioned Manfred Böcker in his study on antisemitism in the Spanish right focussed on the period of the Second Republic; Isabel Rohr contributed a study on the development of antisemitism from the 19th century until 1945; and José Luis Jiménez Rodríguez concentrated on the Francoist dictatorship and the extreme right. Gonzalo Álvarez Chillida and the anthology of Pere Joan i Tous and Heike Nottebaum provide long-term perspectives on the development of antisemitism over the last centuries.¹² Uriel Macías Kapón and Alejandro Baer are two of the few researchers who analysed new forms of antisemitism in Spanish society after 1975, i.e., the interrelations with the perception of the State of Israel.¹³

This brief overview characterizes the type of antisemitism present in Spain and its development over the past five decades. Is the Spanish case an example of religion-based antisemitism in modern Europe – as suggested by the conference's programme? And is a differentiation between antisemitism and anti-Judaism as a religiously motivated hostility towards Jews justified? My subject is the popular and widespread forms of antisemitic attitudes and prejudices in mainstream Spanish society. Therefore, I do not elaborate on antisemitism or neo-Nazism in the Spanish right, a sector where antisemitism has taken an upward trend since the 1960s.¹⁴

I will focus on three areas, which I consider to be important fields for discovering widespread attitudes or clichés: religion, popular culture and politics. For

⁹ See, for example, Informe sobre el antisemitismo en España durante el año 2012, ed. by Observatorio de Antisemitismo; Casa Sefarad-Israel: Estudio sobre antisemitismo en España. Informe de resultados.

¹⁰ <http://observatorioantisemitismo.fcje.org/>, retrieved on 3 April 2014.

¹¹ <http://www.sefarad-israel.es/instituto-holocausto-antisemitismo>, retrieved on 3 April 2014.

¹² Böcker: Antisemitismus ohne Juden; Rohr, Isabelle: The Spanish Right and the Jews, 1898-1945. Antisemitism and Opportunism, Eastbourne/ Portland 2007; Rodríguez Jiménez, José L.: Im Schatten Francos: Antisemitismus in Spanien, in Rensmann, Lars; Schoeps, Julius H. (Eds.): Feindbild Judentum. Antisemitismus in Europa, Berlin 2008, pp. 125-146; Rodríguez Jiménez, José Luis: La extrema derecha española en el siglo XX, Madrid 1997; Álvarez Chillida, Gonzalo: El Antisemitismo en España. La imagen del judío (1812-2002), Madrid 2002; Joan i Tous, Pere; Nottebaum, Heike (Eds.): El olivo y la espada. Estudios sobre el antisemitismo en España (siglos XVI-XX), Tübingen 2003.

¹³ Macías Kapón, Uriel: La tinta del desprecio, in Raíces, 2/1986, pp. 34-35; Baer, Alejandro: Spain's Jewish problem. From the „Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy“ to the „Nazi-Zionist State“, in Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung, ed. by Wolfgang Benz, 18/2009, pp. 89-110; Baer, Alejandro; López, Paula: Israel en el callejón del gato. El conflicto de Gaza y Líbano de 2006 en el humor gráfico español, in Israel, Estrella et al. (Eds.): Israel en los medios de comunicación españoles (2006-2009). Entre el estereotipo y la difamación, Madrid 2010, pp. 31-49; Baer, Alejandro; Zukierman, Federico: Nuevo antisemitismo, viejos estigmas. Caricaturas viñetas de la prensa española sobre el conflicto israelí-palestino (2000-2003), in Raíces, 58/2004, pp. 25-38.

¹⁴ See, for example, Rodríguez Jiménez, José Luis: Los neonazis españoles. Evolución, organizaciones y conexiones internacionales (1966-1994), in Historia 16, 240/1996, pp. 12-24; Álvarez Chillida, Gonzalo: El Concilio Vaticano II y la reacción antisemita en la España de los años sesenta, in Joan i Tous; Nottebaum (Eds.): El olivo y la espada, pp. 394-400.

each of these areas I present and analyse historic examples reflecting the wide range of stereotypes and prejudices.

Excluding Jews from the Spanish Community: The Concept of a Monolithic Nation

In order to understand the characteristics of antisemitism in Spain, one has to look at the strong interrelations between the two concepts of nation and religion that date back to the Middle Ages when the medieval anti-Judaic politics led to a monolithic concept of the Spanish community and eventually formed an image of the “Jew” as the “other”. According to Gonzalo Álvarez Chillida, the medieval persecutions, the politics of the inquisition and the idea of the purity of the blood (*limpieza de sangre*) formed a “substratum of popular antisemitism” through the centuries, which can be noted to the present day.¹⁵

The most important methods of excluding Jews from society were the inquisition, their expulsion in 1492 and the politics of *limpieza de sangre*, which meant that every person applying for a position in a public office had to prove his or her Christian descent. All “new Christians” – as Jewish converts were called – were suspected of secretly following their Jewish religion and therefore accused of being traitors. Jews as a collective were persecuted as “anti-Christ”, as enemies of Christianity.¹⁶

After 1492 – in a country without any real Jewish population – the idea of “pure blood” became an obsession. This contributed to strengthening the social distinction between old and new Christians and to marginalising minorities from society.¹⁷ It also favoured the enduring existence of a negative memory.

The memory of expelling the Jews from the Iberian kingdoms and excluding Jewish converts from society as preconditions for the formation of the nation became an important element in the nation-building process and in the national historiography since the 19th century. This can be seen, for example, in the works of Marcelino Méndez y Pelayo or Ramiro de Maeztu, both of whom support the idea of a historic antisemitism as an integral part of what they called *Hispanidad*.¹⁸ During the Francoist dictatorship in the 20th century the idea of a “biological Catholicism” gained influence again: National-Catholic ideologists argued that only a mono-religious community could in fact form a nation.¹⁹ The Catholic Kings who decreed the expulsion of the Iberian Jews became central to the founding myth of Spain and were praised for their unifying politics.

¹⁵ “sustrato de antisemitismo popular”, Álvarez Chillida: El Concilio Vaticano II y la reacción antisemita, in Joan i Tous; Nottebaum (Eds.): El olivo y la espada, p. 391.

¹⁶ Álvarez Chillida, Gonzalo: Spanien, in Handbuch des Antisemitismus. Judenfeindschaft in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Bd. 1: Länder und Regionen, ed. by Wolfgang Benz im Auftrag des Zentrums für Antisemitismusforschung, München 2008, p. 347.

¹⁷ Hering Torres, Max Sebastián: Rassismus in der Vormoderne. Die „Reinheit des Blutes“ im Spanien der frühen Neuzeit, Frankfurt a.M. 2006.

¹⁸ Menny, Anna Lena: Spanien und Sepharad. Über den offiziellen Umgang mit dem Judentum im Franquismus und in der Demokratie, Göttingen 2013, pp. 44f.

¹⁹ Stallaert, Christiane: Etnogénesis y etnicidad en España, Barcelona 1998, p. 9.

The first conclusion to be made is therefore that the interpretation of the Jewish past on the Iberian Peninsula and the antisemitic discourse strongly influenced each other.

Religion-Based Stereotypes

A dissociation from Judaism was traditionally central to the Christian church. The above-mentioned religious persecution in the Spanish past and the strong influence of Catholicism on the nation-building process (and on society in general) may help to explain the religious-based antisemitic tradition in Spain. The stereotyped figure of “the Jew” remained more or less unchanged until the Second Vatican Council in 1965, which recognized the Jewish roots of Christianity. With the Second Vatican Council, a general discussion about clerical antisemitism and the church’s role during the National-Socialist period started. In Spain, the progressive parts within the church – for example, the newly founded *Amistad Judeo-Cristiana* (Jewish-Christian Friendship Association) – began to fight against antisemitic stereotypes and to inform the Spanish society about Judaism. Nevertheless, the most common and widespread topics, strongly linked to Catholic culture, survived. Popular examples were blaming the Jews as a collective for being responsible for committing deicide and for being usurers, or accusing them of crimes of blood libel.²⁰

The social reservations that had to be overcome are portrayed in a “Letter of Two Jewish Boys”, as it says in the title, which was published in 1969 in the bulletin of the *Amistad Judeo-Cristiana*. The boys are cited with the following questions that hint at long-lasting prejudices against Jews: “why is there such hate against the Jews? Maybe we have a tail? Aren’t we all children of God?”²¹

In the 1970s two very popular legends on blood libel existed in Spain, one concerning Dominguito de Val in the region of Zaragoza and the other the Niño de La Guardia in the region of Toledo.²² In 1976 the Niño de la Guardia was accepted by the Vatican as a local saint in the archbishopric of Toledo.

The longevity of anti-Jewish prejudices within a Catholic society and within a country with a powerful (Catholic) church is also displayed in the difficulties the Jewish-Christian Friendship Association had to face during its fight against popular hostility towards Jews. In the description of its objectives in their bulletin *Amistad Judeo-Cristiana* from the year 1963 an association said that, after centuries of hate and alienation, the time had come for mutual understanding and compassion.²³

²⁰ See, for example, Álvarez Chillida: *El Concilio Vaticano II y la reacción antisemita*, in Joan i Tous; Nottebaum (Eds.): *El olivo y la espada*, pp. 391-422.

²¹ “¿por qué ese odio a los judíos? ¿Acaso tenemos rabo? ¿No somos todos hijos de Dios?”, Carta de dos niños judíos, firmada by Mascos Botbol and José Benarroch, first published in *El Correo Catalán*, 10.7.1969, cited in *Amistad Judeo-Cristiana*, 27/1969: p. 7.

²² See Aldea Vaquero, Quintín; Marin Martínez, Tomás; Vives Gatell, José: *Diccionario de Historia Eclesiástica de España*, Vol. II, Madrid 1972, pp. 1059f; Aldea Vaquero, Quintín; Marin Martínez, Tomás; Vives Gatell, José: *Diccionario de Historia Eclesiástica de España*, Vol. IV, Madrid 1975, pp. 2683f.

²³ Pérez Lozano, José María: *La amistad es una forma de amor*, in *Amistad Judeo-Cristiana*, 1/1963, pp. 1-2.

Various articles in the same bulletin, however, prove the lack of both knowledge and compassion. Prejudices had to be expounded, and the suspicion of trying to proselytise (either the Jews the Christians or vice versa) had to be rejected. In order to break with the long tradition of Christian-based antisemitism, more information and educational work became important parts of its activities.

The necessity to overcome collective resistance and reservation against Judaism is exemplary illustrated by the question “Why am I a friend of the Jews?” raised in the Bulletin of the *Amistad Judeo-Cristiana* in 1967.²⁴ The author of the article, José-Francisco Riaza Saco, argues for a convergence between Christians and Jews following the premises of the Second Vatican Council. He concludes: “I am a friend of the Jews because I understand it as a duty; [...] I have to approach them precisely because of my Christian faith”.²⁵ The Jewish-Christian Friendship Association underlined once again the incompatibility of antisemitism and Christian religion in the booklet *50 preguntas sobre judaísmo (50 Questions about Judaism)* published in 1970:

“Can a Christian be an antisemite?”

“No, in no case. Antisemitism – and in reality we have to call it antijudaism – was condemned by the church repeatedly.”

“For that reason, we can say without doubt that an antisemite does not deserve to be qualified as a good Christian.”²⁶

These examples indicate the dilemma: On the one hand, the “Christian argument” – as I call it – was important for the fight of the *Amistad Judeo-Cristiana* against antisemitism. On the other hand, Catholic tradition favoured the continuance of prejudices and anti-Judaic customs.

Popular Culture

Another indicator for popular prejudices and stereotypes is language. The *Diccionario de la lengua española* published by the *Real Academia Española*, contains the officially approved version of the Spanish language. The following examples from this official dictionary prove the strong influence of the Catholic tradition and its manifestation in idiomatic expressions. The fight against these

²⁴ Riaza-Saco, José-Francisco: ¿Por qué soy amigo de los judíos?, in *Amistad Judeo-Cristiana*, 13/1967, p. 8.

²⁵ “Soy amigo de los judíos por entender que es mi deber; [...] debo acercarme a ellos precisamente a causa de mi fe cristiana”, Riaza-Saco: ¿Por qué soy amigo de los judíos?, in *Amistad Judeo-Cristiana*, 13/1967, p. 8.

²⁶ “¿Puede un cristiano ser antisemita? – Bajo ningún pretexto. El antisemitismo – en realidad se trata de antijudaísmo – ha sido condenado por la Iglesia de un modo reiterado”. – “Por tanto, se puede afirmar sin ambages que un antisemita no puede merecer el calificativo de buen cristiano.”, *50 preguntas sobre judaísmo*, ed. by *Amistad Judeo-Cristiana*, Madrid 1970, p. 27.

offending expressions became another main field of activity for the *Amistad Judeo-Cristiana* in the 1960s and 1970s.²⁷

In order to demonstrate the continuities in the *Diccionario*, we a first example which dates back to the year 1956, when the definition of “Jew” included, for example, “cutthroat, usurer”.²⁸ By the year 1970 one could read the following definition: A “Jew” is someone “who still lives according to the law of Moses”.²⁹ Despite the critics repeatedly and publicly protesting in the meantime, the 1992 edition hints at the exaggerated curiosity of Jews and contains the pejorative explanation of Jews as merchants.³⁰ In the edition of the year 2001, the word “judiada” is defined as a “bad action, tendentiously thought of being characteristic of Jews”.³¹ Other similar examples may be found up to the present day, such as the explanation for “sinagoga” as a “meeting for illegal purposes”, although in this case the definition is marked as “pejorative”.³² On the one hand, these examples feed on traditional stereotypes such as a religiously motivated devaluation of Judaism or the assertion of Jewish greed or special business sense, but they also reflect aspects of a conspiracy theory, containing expressions from the sphere of illegality or dubiousness.

José Manuel Pedrosa did various studies on antisemitism in popular culture and folklore. By interviewing inhabitants in different Spanish regions about their image of the Jew and the Jew’s role in local traditions, he showed that the figure of the Jews represents “the other” in general. The different traditions and customs he mentions transmit a pejorative image of the “Jew”, again influenced by the Catholic tradition.³³ This applies even more to the customs during the Holy Week, when religiously motivated antisemitism is traditionally revived in Spain. The founding of the above-mentioned Amistad Judeo-Cristiana can also be considered as a reaction to antisemitic incidents in Madrid in the context of the Holy Week of 1961.³⁴

One custom related to the Holy Week is called “matar judíos” (killing Jews). It still exists in some Spanish regions in different variations, one of which is drinking a glass of wine on Good Friday, another is making noise in a dark church,

²⁷ See for example Jiménez-Salas, María: Los prejuicios en el lenguaje popular, in Amistad Judeo-Cristiana, 2/1964, p. 8; Benarroch, Carlos: La Real Academia Española y los Judíos, in Amistad Judeo-Cristiana, 31/1970, pp. 8-10; “El Diccionario de la Real Academia Española o seguirá expurgando los conceptos antisemitas”, in Amistad Judeo-Cristiana, 36/1971, p. 3.

²⁸ „avaro, usurero“, Real Academia Española: Diccionario de la lengua española, Madrid 1956 (18th Ed.), p. 774.

²⁹ „Dícese, como israelita y judío, del que aún profesa la ley de Moisés“, Real Academia Española: Diccionario, 1970 (19th Ed.), p. 697.

³⁰ Real Academia Española: Diccionario de la lengua española, Tomo II: h-z, Madrid 1992 (21th Ed.), p. 1209.

³¹ „Acción mala, que tendenciosamente se consideraba propia de judíos“, Real Academia Española: Diccionario de la lengua española, Tomo II: h-z, Madrid 2001 (22th Ed.), p. 1326.

³² Informe sobre el antisemitismo en España durante el año 2012, ed. by Observatorio de Antisemitismo, p. 6.

³³ See Pedrosa, José Manuel: El antisemitismo en la cultura popular española, in Álvarez Chillida; Izquierdo Benito (Eds.): El Antisemitismo en España, pp. 32f; as well as Pedrosa, José Manuel: Visión de lo judío en la cultura popular extremeña, in Cortés Cortés, Fernando; Castellano Barrios, Lucía (Eds.): Raíces hebreas en Extremadura – del candelabro a la encina; Hervás 1995. Actas, Badajoz 1996, pp. 249-283.

³⁴ “Historia de la Amistad Judeo-Cristiana en España”, in Amistad Judeo-Cristiana, 1/1963, pp. 6-7.

symbolizing the killing of the persons guilty for the murder of Jesus.³⁵ Another popular ceremony was practiced during carnival in the part of Extremadura. On this occasion a straw doll was prepared, exhibited and carried around the village before being judged, condemned and executed in various ceremonies. The doll represented a Jew who, according to the tradition, had once lived in the area. The “conviction” of the doll represented the general condemnation of Judaism.³⁶ The repertory of songs for this custom is also strongly antisemitic.³⁷

Recently, however, another phenomenon has been observed: an ostensibly positive presentation of Jewishness in popular culture – such as celebrating a Jewish marriage in the town of Ribadavia.³⁸ This phenomenon can be understood in the context of Philosephardism, a specifically Spanish variety of Philosemitism: Sephardi Jews are described by characteristics that seem to have a positive connotation such as intelligence, a good business sense or beauty; they are seen as members of the Hispanic family and glorified for having preserved Spanish language and culture over centuries – but this is a topic for another article.

Stereotypes in Politics

The characterization of antisemitism in Spain would not be complete without adding a short overview on the political aspects to the examples of traditional anti-Judaism .

The “Jewish question” and the interpretation of the Jewish past were frequently discussed topics during the 19th century – in the context of modernisation and liberation. In the 1930s, during the Second Republic, the “imagined Jew” gained relevance in the political conflict between the Spanish right and left, a time when elements of modern antisemitism emerged in Spain.³⁹

Together with Communists, Republicans and Freemasons Jews were considered enemies of the Spanish nation and as such became part of what the radical right called “Anti-Spain”. Jews were blamed for trying to take over control of the media, the economy and politics in general.⁴⁰ Although only few Jews lived in Spain, this idea fell on fertile soil. The very invisibility of the Jews was considered part of their conspiracy against the Spanish state, making them even more dangerous – as José Luis Rodríguez Jiménez argued.⁴¹

35 Pedrosa: El antisemitismo en la cultura popular española, in Álvarez Chillida; Izquierdo Benito (Eds.): *El Antisemitismo en España*, pp. 37f.

36 Pedrosa: *Visión de lo judío*, in Cortés Cortés; Castellano Barrios (Eds.): *Raíces hebreas en Extremadura*, pp. 249-283.

37 Ibid.

38 See, for example, Cohen, Judith R.: Music and the Re-creation of Identity in Imagined Iberian Jewish Communities, in *Revista de Dialectología y Tradiciones Populares*, 1/1999, pp. 125-144. For the popularization in general see Menny: *Spanien und Sepharad*, chapter “Popularisierung, Regionalisierung, Demokratisierung. Auf dem Weg zu einem pluralen Gedächtnis?”

39 Böcker: *Antisemitismus ohne Juden*, pp. 42-107.

40 See, for example, Rohr: *The Spanish Right*, pp. 50f.

41 Rodríguez Jiménez: *Im Schatten Francos*, in Rensmann; Schoeps (Eds.): *Feindbild Judentum*, p. 127.

Nevertheless, although the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, formerly widely unknown in Spain, started to disseminate quickly in the 1930s and the *Falange* was founded by José Antonio Primo de Rivera, antisemitism never became a main topic for any of the political parties. It was just one aspect of an anti-liberal, strong Catholic ideology and as such part of the political and ideological fight against the Republic.⁴² The emergence of modern antisemitism in Spain did not substitute the traditional anti-Judaic stereotypes; it just added other aspects.

The religious interpretation of politics became even more apparent during the years of the Spanish Civil War, which was interpreted as a holy war against “Anti-Spain”. With the victory of the Francoists in the Civil War in 1939 Spain became officially identified as a Catholic nation, and the church gained influence in state politics. This had consequences for all non-Catholics living in Spain, who could no longer practice their religion in the public sphere. Although there were no antisemitic laws in place, Jews were nevertheless discriminated against as non-Catholics and generally as religious people excluded from society.⁴³

During Francoism the myth of a Judeo-Masonic-Communist conspiracy changed into – or was complemented by – the myth of a conspiracy of world Judaism or a conspiracy of the Jewish state of Israel against Spain. Jews as conspirators were seen as an eternal threat to the nation; they were accused of propagating anti-Spanish politics and of acting secretly as agents of the Israeli state. As murderers of Jesus they were also seen as a threat to the Catholic civilisation. In consequence, they could not fit with the requirements of a nation constituted on its Catholic faith.

Jews as the imagined “other” were excluded from Spanish history by defending the inquisition and expulsion both as wise and necessary decisions made by the Catholic Kings, who were interpreted to have been the nation’s “parents”. While racial antisemitic testimony can hardly be found in Franco’s official statements, constructing the historical master-narrative as a counterpart to Jewish history was characteristic for the official discourse and could be found in Spanish schoolbooks even up to the 1970s.⁴⁴

The image of the “Jew” as an enemy served not only as a pattern in order to interpret history, it also had a stabilizing and unifying function for the regime and the various power groups struggling for influence, as Javier Domínguez Arribas argues. He names five functions of the conspiracy theory for the Francoist government: explaining, legitimising, repressing, creating a mutual enemy and delegitimising the competitor.⁴⁵

In the long-term perspective, the national-Catholic ideology, combined with the strong interrelations between state and church, led to the continuation of religion-based anti-Judaic stereotypes in society and in popular culture up through the 1970s (and sometimes even to the present). Given the fact that antisemitism was

⁴² Böcker: Antisemitismus ohne Juden, pp. 291, 328, 332

⁴³ See Rodríguez Jiménez: Im Schatten Francos, in Rensmann; Schoeps (Eds.): Feindbild Judentum, pp. 125-146.

⁴⁴ See, for example, Menny: Spanien und Sepharad, pp. 248-257.

⁴⁵ Domínguez Arribas, Javier: El enemigo judeo-masónico en la propaganda franquista (1936-1945), Madrid 2009, pp. 490-492.

not central to the Francoist regime and Jews were not even mentioned in the central laws of repression (*Ley de Responsabilidades Políticas*, 1939, *Ley para la Represión de la Masonería y el Comunismo*, 1940, *Ley para la Seguridad del Estado*, 1941),⁴⁶ this might be one of the most surprising aspects, which also seems to contrast with the development in other Western European countries.

After Franco's death in November 1975 the regime ended and a socio-political process of democratisation called "transición" started. Official antisemitism was no longer compatible with democracy, but this does not mean that antisemitism no longer existed in Spain, or that official discrimination of Jews as non-Catholics had been overcome immediately.⁴⁷ On the contrary, antisemitism in Spanish society increased in the 1990s. This can be explained, on the one hand, by the growing amount of immigrants in Spain and, on the other hand, by anti-Israeli campaigns. Anti-Semitism may hence be understood as part of general xenophobia and the fear of being swamped by foreign influences as well as part of pervasive anti-Israelism.⁴⁸ According to Uriel Macías Kapón, there are three different types of antisemitism: First, a religiously motivated anti-Judaism; second, a socio-political antisemitism; and third, antisemitism disguised as anti-Zionism directed against Israel as a Jewish state.⁴⁹ As in other European countries, anti-Zionist positions gained in popularity within the Spanish left during the Six-Day War of 1967 and again during the War in Lebanon in 1982.⁵⁰ Another increase of anti-Israeli positions was observed after the so-called Second Intifada at the beginning of the new millennium. An analysis of the Spanish press done by Alejandro Baer and Paula López during the conflicts in Gaza and Lebanon in 2006 showed that articles about Israel and the Middle East conflict were highly mixed up with Jewish symbols and references to the Holocaust.⁵¹ According to Baer, Israel is not only rejected as a political actor, but also as a symbol of Western values: "Israel is thus rejected as a Jewish State, as an ally of the United States, but also as a Western nation in the center of the Middle East, incarnating the values of the modern world."⁵²

It can be concluded that the image of the Jew is influenced by three main sources – society's strong Catholic tradition, the increase of immigration and Israel's behaviour in the Middle East conflict. The perception of Jews within the context of immigration is especially surprising since there has been virtually no Jewish immigration to Spain in the last years. It can only be explained by the equating of Jews with foreigners – and therefore as non-Spanish – in general. This underlines again that antisemitism in Spain is not directed toward real Jews, but rather toward some imagined figures, reflecting collective fears.

⁴⁶ Rodríguez Jiménez, José Luis: El antisemitismo en el franquismo y en la transición, in Álvarez Chillida; Izquierdo Benito (Eds.): El antisemitismo en España, p. 252; Rohr: The Spanish Right, p. 101.

⁴⁷ Rodríguez Jiménez: Im Schatten Francos, in Rensmann; Schoeps (Eds.): Feindbild Judentum, pp. 138f.

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 143-145.

⁴⁹ Macías Kapón: La tinta del desprecio, in Raíces, 2/1986, pp. 34-35.

⁵⁰ See Álvarez Chillida: El antisemitismo en España, p. 466; Baer; Zukierman: Nuevo antisemitismo, viejos estigmas, in Raíces, 58/2004, pp. 25-38.

⁵¹ Baer; López: Israel en el callejón del gato, in Israel et al. (Eds.): Israel en los medios de comunicación españoles (2006-2009), pp. 31-49.

⁵² Baer: Spain's Jewish problem, in Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung, 18/2009, p. 98.

The survey done by *Casa-Sefarad-Israel* in 2010 shows a decline of traditional antisemitism, and – parallel to the secularization of Spanish society since the 1970s – a growth of modern antisemitism, strongly marked by political and economic aspects.⁵³

Those who expressed their antipathy towards Jews explained it largely by pointing to their religion, customs and ideas (29.6%) and by Israel's role in the Middle East conflict (17.5%).⁵⁴ When asked about the problems created by different religious groups, those interviewees who referred to Jews first mentioned problems caused by immigration (11.4%) and second problems resulting from the religion (10.2%).⁵⁵ These results reveal again a shift from traditional stereotypes to a more politically based antisemitism.

Finally, the recently published *Report on Anti-Semitism in Spain in 2012* of the *Observatorio de Antisemitismo* demonstrates another trend, namely, that most of the incidents reported are manifestations of a fascist or Nazi ideology. The Report also mentions, however, that “the heritage of a deep rejection towards Jewishness still survives in the Spanish collective unconscious”.⁵⁶

Conclusion

The examples provided that antisemitism has to be understood in the context of religious and popular tradition in Spain, as well as in the context of the overall perception of immigration (in this context Jews are equated with foreigners and therefore rejected as a threat), and of Israel and its behaviour in the Middle East conflict. Furthermore, the figure of the “Jew” as a scapegoat offers an approach to explain any number of negative phenomena. While anti-Jewish prejudices in popular mentality and the Catholic tradition still live on, “new” forms of antisemitism are influenced by the actions taken by the State of Israel in the Middle East conflict and by a growing xenophobia in a country that has been transformed from an emigration into an immigration country. Nevertheless, some forms of antisemitism – that at a first glance may seem to be new - are in fact influenced by very traditional ideas.

As mentioned in the beginning, the image of the “Jew” is defined by the interpretation from the past. With this in mind the antisemitic attitudes in modern Spanish society seem to contrast with the popular myth of the “Three Cultures” and the raising interest in Jewish heritage. But the memory of Sefarad is also a very stereotyped one: Sefarad is often imagined as a long-lost golden past and Sefardic Jews are idealized – albeit alien – people with high culture, strange customs and

⁵³ Casa Sefarad-Israel: Estudio sobre antisemitismo en España. Informe de resultados.

⁵⁴ Casa Sefarad-Israel: Estudio sobre antisemitismo en España. Informe de resultados, pp. 11, 59. After the Second Intifada there was an increase of anti-Israeli attitudes in Spanish society, see Baer: Spain's Jewish problem, in *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung*, 18/2009, p. 96.

⁵⁵ In this case practising Catholics exceeded the average of 3.25% with 0.49 points blaming Jews for causing problems in Spain. Casa Sefarad-Israel: Estudio sobre antisemitismo en España. Informe de resultados, pp. 64, 67.

⁵⁶ Informe sobre el antisemitismo en España durante el año 2012, ed. by Observatorio de Antisemitismo, p. 6.

traditions. The memory of Sefarad is sometimes based much more on stereotypes and clichés than on historical facts.

At the same time this positively connotated memory of Sefarad can play an interesting role as background and motivation for the fight against antisemitism. At least this would apply to official statements, for example, during the OSCE Conference on antisemitism and other forms of intolerance organized in Córdoba in 2005, when the foreign minister of Spain, Miguel Ángel Moratinos said the following:

“If Coexistence was possible in the past, as demonstrated by the experience of Córdoba, we cannot resign ourselves to thinking that it is impossible today. We need to be courageous, and follow the example of those who, in the Spain of the three cultures, were able to reconcile their differences and offer an example of coexistence and diversity”.⁵⁷

He then drew a very glorifying and romantic picture of the medieval *convivencia* in al-Andalus, and after regretting the loss of the “spirit of coexistence” he referred to the historic learning process:

“Today’s Spain has learned from the past and has been able to connect with the deep current of tolerance it should never have abandoned. At the same time, reconciliation among Spaniards has been accompanied by recovery of hidden or lost facets of our history, among them one of the most beloved being the Jewish dimension.”⁵⁸

Again, the Córdoba Declaration adopted by the conference members refers in its opening phrase to the “the spirit of Cordoba, the City of Three Cultures”.⁵⁹

To sum up, in the case of Spain it is difficult to clearly distinguish between traditional and modern antisemitism; images of the “Jew” are strongly interwoven with the interpretation of Spain’s “own” past and heritage – in both positive and negative ways.

⁵⁷ Miguel Ángel Moratinos: Opening Ceremony, in OSCE Conference on anti-Semitism and on other forms of intolerance. Cordoba, 8 and 9 June 2005. Consolidated Summary, p. 64.

⁵⁸ Miguel Ángel Moratinos: Opening Ceremony, in OSCE Conference on anti-Semitism and on other forms of intolerance, p. 65. Similar references are to be found in his concluding speech: Intervención Sr. Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores y de Cooperación, Sr. Moratinos, en la ceremonia de clausura conferencia OSCE (Córdoba, 9 de junio de 2005), in Ebd., pp. 178-184

⁵⁹ Córdoba Declaration by the Chairman-in-Office, in OSCE Conference on anti-Semitism and on other forms of intolerance: Annex 1, p. 42.

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