

# From Whence the Hatred?

by [Nikos Akritas](#) (March 2024)



Beam of the Passion (Detail), 13th-century Spain

The origins of Christian antisemitism lie at the very heart of the religion. Put simply, the first Christians were a Jewish sect, believing the Messiah (their anointed liberator) had arrived, in direct opposition to mainstream Judaism. They could not criticize the Romans for crucifying their leader because doing so would have rendered their movement in opposition to the state.

Consequently, instead of crying foul against the Romans for this calamity, the founders of the Christian myth had to find a scapegoat. This they did by inventing the story of a conspiracy behind the crucifixion. This served a double purpose. The first was to delegitimise and provide a powerful narrative against their main opponents, mainstream Jews who did not believe the Messiah had come. The second was to avoid being viewed by the Roman state as a seditious movement.

The very reason their Messiah was put to death was because the Romans saw in his movement sedition. He was punished accordingly with the practice meted out to those who rebelled, crucifixion. Such a decision would have been made solely by the Roman authorities, without deference to, or interference by, any non-Roman body.

When Constantine eventually declared Christianity the state religion (4<sup>th</sup> century AD), there was no messy narrative of the Romans bearing sole responsibility for the decision to murder the God they now adopted. In addition to this new God, they also absorbed wholesale the now widely held animosity early Christians harboured towards those they claimed really lay behind the murder—Jews. Thus, Roman suspicion of a rebellious people and the pragmatic scriptural concerns of a nascent religious movement coalesced to produce the Jew hatred that was to characterize the very core of Christianity for the next two thousand years.

Similarly, the origin of Muslim antisemitism lies at the heart of the Islamic religion and its foundation myths. According to Muslim tradition, Muhammad saw himself as the latest prophet of the Jews (of which there were plenty in pre-Islamic Arabia) but, failing to convince them, henceforward harboured a grudge. His insistence on everyone believing in his God and aggression towards those following other religions in polytheistic and multi-religious (read tolerant) Mecca was what caused him to be driven out. He was not persecuted for his beliefs, he was perfectly welcome to worship any God or gods he believed in; he was repudiated because of his intolerance to religious pluralism.

Muhammad's flourishing in Medina came about as a result of giving religious sanction to pillaging and enslavement. Again, this is all accounted for in Muslim tradition. These violent practices resulted in war with Mecca, following which Jewish tribes were either banished on ridiculous pretexts or

slaughtered for favouring (not fighting alongside) the enemy; the enemy being merchants Muhammad's followers were robbing. Since then, Jews have always been viewed as betraying the Prophet and natural enemies of Islam. In any case, their inferior position is clearly laid out in the Koran.

The very beginnings of Islam, then, involved genocide against Jews and their vilifying in holy scripture. To claim Islam has been benign towards Jews, especially when compared to Christian atrocities over the previous twenty centuries, is disingenuous. The sub-human status of Jews under Islam, like that of Christians, meant they were subject to conditions inferior to those of the true believers. This religiously sanctioned discrimination, part of shariah law, became the 'natural order' of things, creating a social environment conducive to periodic persecution and massacres across north Africa and the Middle East.

When Europe reached the period now referred to as the Enlightenment, based around ideas of reason and universalism, ideology and blind faith seemed to have no place. Religiously sanctioned hatred had no place. But where, then, could superstition and irrationalism go? The response was the Romantic movement, revolving around ideas of emotion, mystery, naturalism and the notion of the noble savage. The latter, in quintessential opposition to rational progress, harkened back to an imaginary state of nature Europeans had lost connection with. It was, essentially, an anti-European (Europeans representing rationalism) ideology which the Nazis would later subscribe to (seeing in rationalism Jewish influence).

Just as early Christian writers adopted the language and ideas of Greek philosophy in order to argue against it and win converts to Christianity (hence the influence of Platonic ideas on Christianity, such as a perfect heaven, the soul and concepts of the Trinity), so those opposing the Western march of progress, even those believing they were unshackling themselves from it, retained as part of their cultural

inheritance something of what they rejected. Secularist philosophers and thinkers, who expressed themselves in rational terms, still retained elements of ideology. Hence, communist movements, just like other belief systems, retained a visceral hatred of Jews. The latter's existential threat shifted from religious to materialist conspiracy. Indeed, Jews were now cast as homo economicus, the epitome of rational man, by writers like Karl Marx.

Jews had been cast as the eternal enemy by centuries of Christian doctrine, hearsay and pure ignorance. Even as religion became less important, outright rejected even, the belief in a malign enemy continued. The Jewish cabal had metamorphosed from God killers to a demonic worldwide conspiracy, out to enslave the rest of mankind. The success of Jewish financiers (originating in discrimination against Jews, limiting them to trades and professions beneath the ruling caste) only served to reinforce the idea of their ungodly and underhand schemes.

Irrational and sinister, these beliefs have carried over to left wing movements through their communist links; reference to the success of Jewish bankers, financiers and merchants, viewed by communists from the very beginnings of their movements as proof of a worldwide Jewish conspiracy (the puppeteers of capitalism), continues today. Indeed, their anti-capitalism is synonymous with antisemitism, for they believe Jews own a disproportionate amount of the world's wealth.

These conspiratorial ideas are common to most of the Left, in their support of socialism and opposition to capitalism; note the continuing, explicit anti-Semitic rhetoric emanating from within the UK's Labour Party—poised to win the next General Election. Jewish success in the USA only serves as proof of Jewish concordance with capitalism and intent on world domination; a belief with which Muslim loathing coalesces to produce regimes like that of Iran's and individuals like

Sheikh Babikir Ahmed Babikir, as well as a state of affairs where [oil money compromises reputable British newspapers](#), whose affiliates publish such claims.

Societies that strive for the promotion of reason, liberalism, free speech, individual rights and an absence of ideology are the only forms of society that have managed to free themselves, somewhat, of this irrational two thousand year hatred. Ideologies based on an element of faith and doctrine, religious or secular, however, retain their antisemitic hatred and wear the badge with pride. True liberalism, true civilization, opposes such primitive hatred. Advocacy of antisemitism is an indicator of a society, movement, faith or ideology that stands against civilized society.

## [Table of Contents](#)

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