



ruptive modernity that was antithetical to any kind of an imagined tradition, so dear to the right's heart. And for the left, America and the Jews were the epitome of an unbridled capitalism that was bad everywhere but that exhibited its most stark characteristics in these two related entities.

Suffice it to say that America and the Jews have always been negatively and fearfully intertwined as particularly despised protagonists of modernity for both the European right and left throughout the 20th century, if not before. Only thus can one explain the anti-globalization movement's massive support for the Palestinians. Why did Jose Bove show up in Ramallah and not in Gujarat where many more Muslims were slain in multiple pogroms perpetrated by Hindus? Rather than explaining this as simple hostility toward Israel, it is a hostility aimed at globalization, which has become synonymous with the United States, and by extension Israel and Jews.

And this brings us to Europe's irritation with the United States that has less to do with policy differences than with values. When Europeans in the 1990s embarked on the arduous process of building the European Union, they began to raise the issue of

having different, perhaps incompatible, values from those of the Americans. While it will long remain a question what values and identities Europeans themselves share, it is becoming clear that they have begun to embrace one negative value with considerable fervor: not being American.

This helps explain why many Europeans fast abandoned their post-September 11 sympathies for the United States and reverted to their default of seeing America as an uncouth bully. By viewing Israel as an extension of the United States, this mechanism of a negative identity reaches to the Middle East as well. It is not so much sympathy for the Palestinians but antipathy for the Israelis and the Jews that drives European opinion in this crisis — an antipathy that also draws much of its vigor from hostile feelings toward the United States.

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Jews, the End of the Vertical Alliance, and Contemporary Antisemitism

Pierre Birnbaum

A Star of David, accompanied by the expression dirt traitor, was scrawled on the statue of Captain Dreyfus in early February, just as France experienced one of the worst antisemitic waves in history. This wave was largely provoked by the imaginary fallout of the struggles in the Middle East and in the events following September 11, 2001.

It is as if, suddenly, antisemitism stemming from different sources but with identical imagery has joined forces, as if antagonistic political currents could meet, for an instant, in a common hatred of Jews, Israel, and their dominating American allies. It is as if the dreamed-of alliance between the populist extreme right and an Islamic militant movement that already haunted the end of the previous cen-

tury could briefly take the form of a common refusal of Jews, of money, of capitalism.

On one side, there are young people — often of Maghrebian origin living in poor suburbs and hostile to Israel — who burn synagogues, attack schools, student buses, and rabbis, write slogans glorifying bin Laden and Palestine on synagogues, proclaim "Allah is great," or write "Dirty Jew, go back to Palestine." And on the other, there is Jean-Marie Le Pen, whose antisemitism is well known, winning the first round of the presidential elections over the socialist candidate Lionel Jospin before being defeated through a national mobilization in the name of the republic.

Does this mean that an antisemitism derived from conflicting origins might for a moment estab-

lish itself in the name of conflicting identity-based nationalisms that, each day, wear away a little more the status of French Jews? Does it mean that these imaginary rivals might inflict a fatal blow to the old French model of integration?

Apart from the two main contemporary centers (to use Simon Dubnov or Salo Baron's expression) of Judaism — America and Israel — only France (after the decline of the Russian and the Arabic Jewish civilization) represents a model where the future of the country is significant in terms relative to the future of its Jews. In France, the symbolic placement of Jews in modern history is crucial because the model of Jewish emancipation was born within the Enlightenment and French Revolution. Throughout their history, the Jews of France have established a privileged rapport with the state. They maintain a traditional vertical alliance with it, which has reduced particularism and all forms of collective identification within the public sphere but has also legitimized the beliefs of every individual within the private sphere.

In many ways, one can say that French Jews invented a model of Diaspora Jewish life in accordance with the French model of a strong, universalist state. Although condemned by some Zionist thinkers and accused of serving a nation-state that reduced their identity, they managed, in reality — as did their non-Jewish co-citizens — to preserve for the most part their inner identity, their culture, their collective memory, their values, and their specific ways of socializing. Loyal to their country and deprived of any territorial "niche," they managed to maintain a specific collective conscience while avoiding the formation of a nation within a nation as they had before the Revolution.

But nowadays, thanks to the decline of the state, the return to civil society, and the decentralizing process, many French Jews have recreated an "imaginary community" within society — a "domicile" within a nation. From this emerged a grassroots community based on the visibility of specific political and communal structures and accompa-

nied by the emergence of signs of a relative *Judaisation* of the public sphere: Jewish festivals and rallies, Hebrew writing on stores, kippah-wearing, and the symbolic delimitation of religious spaces. One must ask if the Jewish community is purposefully distancing itself from the state, putting into question the traditional vertical alliance with the authorities. The integration of French Jews could then be transformed into systems of negotiation or horizontal conflicts to the detriment of vertical ties to the state.

As voters, Jewish political power has been considerable weakened. The American-style political logic reigns, where policy is based on the lobbying efforts of a specific collective that seeks advantages that will maintain the loyalty of the voter. Political parties now do not hesitate to ethnicize their electoral lists, trying to attract voters with multiple identities, particularly voters linked to the large minority of four to six million people of Muslim origins. The Jews of France, on the other hand, number about six or seven thousand, and are an increasingly nonexistent

force outside of the anti-Le Pen vote. They are dispersed among all political opinions and largely reject the ethnic strategy, as well as the idea of a Jewish vote.

Suddenly, in the Hexagon, the sudden withdrawal of the state and the rise of special interests (particularisms) in the heart of the public sphere positions imaginary communities face to face. From now on, we can expect that Jews will become just one minority among others, withdrawing from their traditional alliance with the state and renouncing increasingly the classical vertical alliance that protected them most of the time from hostile masses. And they do not know what their destiny will be in a reconfigured public space.

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