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Anti-Semitism in the Sepharadí Mind*

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To the holy memory of my cousin David Faur: « Varón perfecto y recto, temeroso de Dios y apartado del mal » [That man was whole-hearted and upright, and one that feared God, and shunned evil] (Job 1,1).**

The concrete sense of all social and psychological interaction — as anti-Semitism happens to be — is determined not only by the aggressor, but also by the victim. Far from being a passive element, the victim is who interprets the aggressive act and determines its concrete sense. In his masterful opus *Reflexions sur la question juive* (1946),¹ Jean-Paul Sartre allows us to see the level of « cooperation » that can be established between the aggressor and the victim: They both stimulate and identify as the « adversary » and the cause of his own disgraces. As we shall see, they mutually use this as an escape goat to evade all personal responsibility.² Sometimes, as Borges dexterously points out, the aggressor ends-up acquiring the identity of the victim.³ In other occasions, thus demonstrated by Canetti, the victim acquires the role of the aggressor, in this manner passing the tormenting « sting » to others.⁴

Generally, the specialists on the subject of anti-Semitism, consider the victim as an element categorically passive. Thus, one disregards to study the attitudes of the victim. The purpose of this study is to examine the Sepharadí's attitude in the presence of {395} anti-Semitism. As we shall see, what is particular about this attitude is the meticulous care to evade all forms of « cooperation » with the aggressor. In this manner, one avoids the establishment of stimuli cycles and reciprocity.⁵ This attitude is linked with another basic element of the Sepharadí strategy: To be totally responsible for his own disgraces and tribulations.

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One of the most tragic episodes of Sepharadí history was the establishment of the Spanish Inquisition (1481). Conceptually, the Inquisition represented the middle road between the massive slaughter of Jews in the 14th c. (1340, 1391), which nearly annihilated the important communities of *Gerona, Cataluña, Aragón, Castilla* and

* Translated by David Ramírez. Brackets are mine.

* Si no se indica, todas las traducciones son nuestras.

¹ Véase STEVEN SCHWARZSCHILD, « J.P. Sartre as Jew », *Modern Judaism*, (Spring, 1983), 39-73.

² Cf. mi *Rabbi Ysrael Moshe Hazzan*, (Heb) (Haifa: Academic Publications, 1978), p. 42, n. 11.

³ JORGE LUIS BORGES, « La forma de la espada », *Ficciones en Obras Completas* (Buenos Aires: Ultramar, 1977), pp. 491-495.

⁴ ELIAS CANETTI, *Crowds and Power* (Penguin Books), pp. 66-71, 354-355.

⁵ Véase n. 75.

Andalucía, and the Expulsion in the year 1492. On one hand, those killings sprees were accompanied by forced conversions, thus resulting in the *cristiano nuevo* (New Christian), designated in Hebrew as '*anus*' (pl. '*anusim*'), in other words « the forced one. »⁶ The purpose of the Inquisition was to investigate the sincerity and behavior of the *cristianos nuevos*. On the other hand, the Edict of Expulsion declares that Jewish deportation has as its objective the prevention of any contact between the *cristianos (nuevos)* and their former coreligionist:

E otrosi obimos procurado e dado orden como se hiziese ynquisiçion en los dichos nuestros reynos e señorios, la qual como sabeys ha mas de doze años que se ha fecho e fase, e por ella se an hallado muchos culpantes segun es notorio e segun somos ynformados de los ynquisidores e de otras muchas personas religiosas, ecclesiasticas e seglares, consta e parece el gran daño que a los christianos [nuevos] sa a seguido e sigue de la participaçion, conbersaçion, comunicaçion que han tenido e tienen con los judios, los quales se prueban que procuran siempre por quantas bias e maneras {396} pueden de subvertir e subtraer de nuestra santa fee catolica a los fieles christianos. . .⁷

We have procured and given orders that an Inquisition be made in the said kingdoms and lordships, as you may well know that twelve years since we have done so, and through this (Inquisition) we have found many guilty, according to what is notorious, and as we are informed by the Inquisitors and many other religious people, both ecclesiastic and secular. It is evident, as it appears, the great harm continued by the christianos nuevos, according to their participation, conversation, communication that they have had with the Jews, who try by any means to subvert and subtract these faithful Christians from our holy catholic faith . . .

In other words, the Inquisition could not function properly, if the '*anus*' continued maintaining contact with his former coreligionist. A contemporary Sepharadí chronicler said, « Those two kings [Fernando and Isabella] placed Inquisitors over the *conversos* to see if they still followed their customs or not, » and then adds: « they placed them to scare them, put them in public evidence and tease them, and many were burned during those times. »⁸ Samuel Usque (16th c.), in his *Consolaçam as Tribulaçoens de Ysrael* (Ferrara, 1553) describes the Inquisition activities in the following:

Because no other ailment could be as rigorous as that one in *Castilla* [= the Spanish Inquisition], [the king of Portugal] told Rome to [bring] another monster similar to the one in Spain, that even though some years have passed since its establishment, it has [already] caused cruel and fearful ruin among the badly baptized people [= the

⁶ Esta fue la manera tradicional de designar a esos desdichados, la forma « marrano » (= « cerdo », o « puerco » joven) es un peyorativo que fue usado por los cristianos para designar a sus nuevos coreligionarios. Los judios no acostumbraban designar a sus antiguos coreligionarios de esta manera, cf. R. SHIMON DURAN, *Yakhin wu-Bocaz* (Livorno. 5542/1782), II, fol. 68 b-d.

⁷ LUIS SUÁREZ FERNANDEZ, Documentos acerca de la Expulsión de los Judíos (Valladolid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1964), p. 392.

⁸ R. YOSEF HA-KOHEN, *Emeq ha-Bakha*, trad. Pilar León Tello (Madrid-Barcelona: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1964), p. 176, cf. *ibid.*, p. 172.

'anusim]. Its arrival made their faces go white, disturbing the ease of their spirits, and covering their souls with pain and sadness. It expelled repose from their abode, and they make them live in dark prisons, where they live with anxiety and constant sighs. Because there they build a trap for them to fall, in the fire [prepared by the Inquisition] that is to burn them. There they put them to suffer, to the point that they end up killing their own children with their hands; they send their husbands to be burned, take away the lives of their siblings, fabricate orphans, multiply widows, make the rich into poor, and destroy the powerful. To those born well, they make them burglars, and to their prudent and modest women, they sow them in lowly and infamous places, driven by poverty and helplessness. Until this moment, they have consumed through fire a great number [of victims]. They do not punish them one by one, but in groups of thirty and fifty. And when {367} they burn and destroy them, they attract a great number of Christian people, who rejoice and become merry to see my limbs burn at the stake, which they fire with kindling brought [by the *'anusim*] on their own backs from far away places. These badly baptized people [= the *'anusim*] are so filled with terror of this beast, that their eyes are constantly vigilant through the streets to see if someone pursuing them, their hearts are uncertain and they walk trembling as a tree's leaf, and they staggeringly stop, with fear to be attacked. Any blow that this animal gives, dim as it may be, it alters [the *'anusim*] and fill as if their entrails spill over, because with this ailment everyone suffers as if they were a single body. At their tables, they bring the morsel to their mounts with suspicion, and at the hour that repose has been given to them, she [the Inquisition] bothers and startles them. The happiness and feasts of weddings and births becomes sadness and confusion. Finally, a thousand mortal gulps they make them swallow each moment, because it is not enough to give external signs to be Christian, but they have to examine their entrails with fire.⁹

It would be interesting in this manner, to examine what have been the causes of the Inquisition in the Sepharadí mind. As we shall see, the Sepharadí chroniclers coincide in the sense of the Inquisition and its causes: they cannot be attributed to the Spanish and Portuguese people, nor to the [authentic] Christian religion. Those ones responsible are the Hebrew people; the Inquisition is just a mere instrument of Divine justice.

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The establishment of the Inquisition is due to a divine decree, alluded already in the Aramaic version of Ezequiel. We are thus informed by one of the victims of the Expulsion.¹⁰ From this we gather that this punishment comes from God and not from those who inflict the punishment. In effect, R. Shelomoh ibn Verga (1460-1554), asserts that the Inquisition is a divine punishment whose causes are seven, among them are the promiscuity, greed, dishonesty and arrogance from some members of the Nation of {398} Israel.¹¹ This doctrine has its roots in Isaiah 10: 5ff, where it

⁹ Fol. 201b-202b.

¹⁰ *Emeq ha-Bakha*, pp. 172-173.

¹¹ *Shebet Yehudai*, ed. Shohet (Jerusalem, Mosad Bialik, 1947), pp. 127-128.

describes Asur, the destructor of Israel, as « a rod » in the hand of God. This is Samuel de Usque's doctrine, who quotes Deuteronomy 30: 17-18, and determines that the cause of the Inquisition is the sin of apostasy: « and I being ignorant, hidden already in under the cloak of Christianity, it seemed as if I was saving my life, but it was contrary to this. »¹² From this, Hebrew optimism is born: their calamities and tribulations are only medicine that will save the eternal people of Israel. It is thus asserted by Usque:

The fifth path [to consolation] is the great good that proceeds from the ails of Spain and Portugal, and for which you cry a lot. Because when the limbs are becoming consumed by herpes, it is preferable that they be severed with knife or fire, so to save the rest of the body, and may not suffer the same ill in the future. In such case the surgeon is cruel medicine. . . And if you observe well, his mercy is great in being cruel with you, because if this venom would continue penetrating in your entrails, in a few years you would have killed the memory of Judaism in your children, and now that your members are outside any danger, there is no other remedy more merciful that would be enough to save them.¹³

It is not only that the Inquisition must be understood as if it were a surgeon's knife, but it is not permitted to impute the Christians and their faith the excesses made against the Jews and their descendants: the true Christians love and protect the Hebrews. The hate towards the Hebrews, professed by some Christians — it is thus asserted by ibn Verga — proceeds « from the ignorant who believe that the price of their food has gone up from the moment that the Jews entered the kingdom, and that they too compete in their [own] professions. These have also resulted in some expulsions promoted by the clergy. . . who preach every day hard statements against the Jews, but the other class of Christians respected the Jews with esteem. . . and they were very loved, as the elders of Sepharad {399} very well know. »¹⁴ The Sepharadi chroniclers point to the Popes and other Christians who defend the Jews¹⁵ and they condemn the Expulsion, as well as the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisition.¹⁶ Thus we should not be surprised to find among the exiles, rabbis of the size of Yitshaq^c Arama (c. 1420-1494) and Yosef Ya^cbes (m. 1507) favorably quoting Christian sages as examples of intellectual and religious honesty, and from whom would be convenient for some Hebrew pseudo-intellectuals to imitate.¹⁷

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¹² *Consolaçam as Tribulações de Israel*, fol. 203b.

¹³ *Ibid.*, fol. 230b-231^a.

¹⁴ *Shebet Yehuda*, p. 118.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 162; cf. *ibid.*, p. 118.

¹⁶ R. IMMANUEL ABOAB, *Nomología* (5389/1629), pp. 290-293; Ishac Cardoso, *Las Excelencias de los Hebreos* (Amsterdam, 1679), pp. 383-385; *Noticias Recónditas y Posthumas del Procedimiento de las Inquisiciones de España y Portugal con sus Presos*, Anónimo (Villa Franca [?], 1722), pp. 17-37.

¹⁷ Yitshaq^c Arama, *Hazut Qasha* (Sabioneta, 5312/1552), fols. 13a, 14a; R. Yosef Ya^cbes, *Or ha-Hayyim* (Ferrara, 5314/1554), fols. 7a, 9b.

The historic reality of the Jews in the Iberian peninsula was not particularly conducive for this type of positive attitude that we have just noted. Quite the contrary. The Iberian Jew was slandered in his (a) persona, (b) honor, (c) and was object of religious hatred; at the same time, he was abused (d) by civil and (e) religious institutions.

The Sepharadí had been a victim of racial hatred that resulted in the fabrication of physical and prejudicial psychological archetypes, all of which were imputed on the Hebrews. A distinguished Spanish historian, Nicolás López Martínez, Professor of Sacred Theology in the Seminary of *M. de Burgos*, develops this subject. In the first chapter of his work, *Los Judaizantes Castellanos* (Burgos: Publicaciones del Seminario Metropolitano de Burgos, 1954), he shows « the Racial compatibility» between *conversos* and *crístianos (viejos)* [i.e. non-Hebrew Christians].¹⁸ The fact that a *converso* of the stature of Alonso de Cartagena (1385-1456),¹⁹ had to defend the racial parity of Hebrew *conversos*, in his *Detensorium unitatis christianae* (Madrid, 1943), can be an useful guideline [to understand] {400} the level of racial discrimination in Spain. The *pureza de sangre* [Clean Blood] statutes, promulgated through out all of the Iberian Peninsula, show categorically the futility of such a defense.²⁰ Racial hatred resulted in the fabrication of physical and psychological archetypes designed to denigrate the Jew. Among the physical defects, they were imputed with bad odor,²¹ who « walk with a twisted head as the pig, »²² and « who have a tail, and that every month they bleed as women during their menstruation. »²³ Isaac Cardoso (1604-1681), relates us humorously an anecdote of something that happened to him when he was visiting one of his patients:

But one should not silence a comical story that happened in Madrid, thirty years since, or a little more. There was once an *Alcalde de Corte* [Court Mayor] whose name was Don Juan de Quiñones, a man of letters and curiosity, of diverse scholarship, and copious library, and who wrote some treatises and particular books. . . and among them, he made one of this subject that we try to prove, that the Jews have a tail, and come with their menstruation, and blood, just like women who suffer due to the grave sin, committing this by quoting some Authors, and he gave me one of these [books.] Shortly thereafter, he came down with hemorrhoids so large and big in those places with blood, and pain, which fittingly looked like a tail; then I told him in company of another surgeon, *Vuestra merced* must also incur in the sin of that death [i.e. Jesus' crucifixion], because we see the same ailment, as you were describing of the Jews who have a tail, and blood, and who have all this; once we had this conversation, jokingly, he laughed, and said that this [Jewish ailment] had nothing to do with him, since he was very well accredited as a *Christiano viejo*, and *Hidalgo*

¹⁸ Para una defensa del racismo español, Véase JULIO CARLO BAROJA, *Los Judíos en la España Moderna y Contemporánea*, 3 vols. (Madrid; Ediciones Istmo, 1978), vol. 3, pp. 285-293.

¹⁹ Sobre Alonso de Cartagena, Véase el excelente estudio de OTTAVIO CAMILLO, *El Humanismo Castellano* (Valencia: Horizon, 1976).

²⁰ Véase ALBERT A. SICROFF, *Les controverses des statuts de « purete de sang » en Espagne du XVe au XVIIIe siecle* (Paris, Bidier, 1960).

²¹ *Las Excelencias de los Hebreos*, p. 345. , (22) *Ibid.*, p. 348.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 348.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 345; cf. *Los Judíos en la España Moderna y Contemporánea*, vol. 3, p. 201 n. 20.

from *la Mancha*; we [then] finished the conversation, and he remained with the defect that he imputed on the Jews.²⁴

After examining the physical defects imputed on the Jews, Cardoso concludes:

{401} The lowly state of the Hebrews, and the contradiction of their adversaries imputes on them many stains, and defects, so to make argument for their disesteem and scorn.²⁵

Also at the psychological level, the Hebrew is imputed with a total negative personality. Besides the vices of greed²⁶ and arrogance,²⁷ they were imputed with libertinage,²⁸ homosexuality,²⁹ disloyalty³⁰ and being corruptor of sacred books.³¹ As the object of religious hatred, they were imputed with the ritual murder of children.³² It would be worth to observe that despite scholars of the size of Loeb,³³ Levi³⁴ y Reinach,³⁵ it has been categorically proven the falsity of such an accusation, this is still repeated by some of the most distinguished and lettered Spaniards. Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo asserts that in effect the *conversos* had taken « an innocent child » as a prisoner « . . . and they executed him with horrible torments, to the point of crucifixion, thus parodying the passion of Christ. »³⁶ Nicolás López Martínez vehemently defends this accusation. The defenses put forward by Jewish historians are « idiocies » and « irresponsible when it comes to deal with a Spanish Catholic ». These historians are « authors dedicated to falsify history. »³⁷ The Jews were also accused of Nemocratic crimes, as it were the desecration of {402} of hosts.³⁸ Modern authors repeat such accusations. Menéndez Pelayo writes:

²⁴ *Las Excelencias de los Hebreos*, p. 346.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 349.

²⁶ *Los Judíos en la España Moderna y Contemporánea*, vol. I, p. 93. (27) *Ibid.*, p. 102.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

²⁸ Cf. *Shebet Yehuda*, p. 127.

²⁹ *Los Judaizantes Castellanos*, p. 401: « La sodomía es venida de judías ».

³⁰ *Las Excelencias de los Hebreos*, pp. 367-377.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 390-399.

³² Véase *Los Judíos en la España Moderna y Contemporánea*, vol. I, pp. 181-188.

³³ ISIDORE LOEB, « Le juifs de l'histoire et le juif de la légende », *Revue des Etudes Juives*, 20 (1890), XXXIII-LXI.

³⁴ ISRAEL LEVI, « Le juif de la légende », *Revue des Etudes Juives*, 20 (1890), 249-252; 22 (1891), 230-235.

³⁵ SALOMÓN REINACH, « L'Inquisition et les juifs », *Revue des Etudes Juives*, 40 (1900), LXII-LXIV.

³⁶ *Historia de los Heterodoxos Españoles*, vol. I (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1965), p. 642.

³⁷ *Los judaizantes Castellanos*, p. 196. A una conclusión similar, pero con retórica más refinada, se colige del análisis de Caro Baroja, *vide supra* n. 32.

³⁸ *Las Excelencias de los Hebreos*, pp. 402-408; cf. *Los Judíos en la España Moderna y Contemporánea*, vol. 1, pp. 188-192; vol. 2, pp. 445-447.

The dark superstition of the *conversos* was such that they were led to do witchcraft with a consecrated host, as it is confirmed by the *Niño de la Guardia* process, whose heart they reserved for such an objective.³⁹

As Cardoso correctly points out, these accusations are always accompanied by portentous miracles, executed by the very sacred objects, when the Jews were desecrating them. Curiously, when Muslims and Protestants profaned the same objects, one does not experience any miracle:

When the Calvinists, or the Protestants, or the Muslims drag the Xpos. stomp of the host, destroy the images, topple their altars, those miracles of speaking statues, jumping hosts, and blood stain do not occur, but only these inventions happen when they attribute them to the Jews, who like mute sheep, and gentle lambs, there is no one to protect them, or defend them, and who lack power to defend themselves. . .⁴⁰

« If a Child, a Youth is missing in the Cities, if he's stolen » —Cardoso thus describes the Christian attitude in Spain — « it must be the Jews who kidnapped him, if impious and perverse men kill him, the Jews were the murderers, there is no worst evil, no impiety as furious, of which they have not been imputed ». Then he adds: « they [the Jews] always carry the shame of those crimes, provoked by depraved men, being of any kind; and even though their innocence be evident, they are blamed and punished »⁴¹. For the Sepharadí, far from being cruel and merciless, Judaism and the Jews represent the highest values of human kind:

The Jews are merciful with God, with their own, with the strangers, with the pilgrims, with the enemies, with the {403} animals, with the birds, with the trees, in sum all the Law is a compendium of piety and a paragon of love.⁴²

Nonetheless, the Jew is imputed with the charge of hatred to Christian. This accusation is repeated in modern times. Alluding to the ritual murders imputed to the Jews, López Martínez alludes to a « virulent anti-Christianity » and the « hate » of the Jews.⁴³ The purpose of such an accusation is, as noted by Cardoso, to find an excuse in order to justify the atrocities and the crimes that they wish to commit against the Jew:

con sembrar essa fama vulgar [que los judíos son crueles y despiadados] están en una firme creencia, levantandole, que son homicidas para matarlos a ellos, que derraman su sangre para derramar la suya, con que estas dos calunias, y testimonios de la sangre, y de las hostias, o imagenes son dos blancos, y dos fitos, que exponen, y

³⁹ *Historia de los Heterodoxos Españoles*, vol. 1, p. 643.

⁴⁰ *Las Excelencias de los Hebreos*, p. 407; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 402-403.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, P: 408.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 378, cf. p. 389.

⁴³ *Los Judaizantes Castellanos*, p. 199.

publican para tirar a nuestras vidas, con un furor barbaro, y nuestros adversarios ellos son los testigos, y los jueces contra nuestra inocencia.⁴⁴

They firmly believe to sow that vulgar fame [that the Jews are cruel and merciless], raisings [claims], that they are murderers, so they can kill them; that they spill their blood so to spill theirs too; with these two calumnies, and testimonies of blood spilling, and of hosts, and images are two bull's-eye, two targets that they expose, and which they publish to spend our lives, with barbaric furor; and our adversaries become our witnesses and our judges against our innocence.

The Sepharadí felt abused and betrayed by the civil authorities. One must remember, that the edict of Expulsion, published on March 31, 1492, gave until the first of July of the same year as the expiration date to arrange all the financial issues, so to leave Spain:

so pena que si no lo fiziesen e cumpliesen así e fueren hallados. . . yncurran en pena de muerte e confiscación de todos sus bienes para la nuestra Camara e Fisco, en las quales penas yncurran por ese mismo fecho e derecho sin otro proçeso, sentença, ni declaraçion.⁴⁵

If they were not to comply as stipulated, and were they to be found . . . they have incurred in the death penalty and confiscation of all their assets for our Treasury, punishment to be executed for their doings without due process, sentence or defense.

More yet, the expelled could not take with them all their assets and money. The Edict stipulates the following:

That they may take with them. . . their assets through sea and land, as long as they do not take minted gold or silver {404} nor other things forbidden by the law of our kingdoms, save for merchandise that is not forbidden or to be exchanged.⁴⁶

The crimes of ‘force and violence made against the Hebrews of Portugal’ /« fuerça y violencia hecha á os Hebreos de Portugal »⁴⁷ are very well known. The following case instigated by king Don Manuel will serve as an example:

And he ordered that all Israelite children, not older than fourteen years of age, may be taken away from their parents; and once apart, they [the Christians] may make of them Christians: it must be known that this could not happen without emotional upsets, and it was (Osorio continues) a horrendous and miserable spectacle, to see their tender children be uprooted from the arms and breasts of their afflicted mothers: to see their wretched parents be dragged behind, as they assiduously held their children, and to see them being beaten and hurt so to uproot the children from their hands: to hear their crying towards heaven, the sighs, the groans, and tears that filled

⁴⁴ *Las Excelencias de los Hebreos*, p. 409.

⁴⁵ *Documentos acerca de la Expulsión de los Judíos*, pp. 393-394.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 394.

⁴⁷ Cf. *Nomología*, pp. 291,297.

every place. In the manner that this cruelty caused many of those disturbed parents throw their children into pits; and other [parents] kill themselves with their own hands so not to see such horror with their own eyes. Manuel's cruelty did not end there. . . that after a thousand discomforts and extortions, they were put (as Usque relates) inside the shed as sheep: and there they were forced upon their afflicted bodies to lie what the souls and understanding did not believe or approved.⁴⁸

Finally, it would be convenient to note that the Inquisition, as the foremost religious authority in the Iberian Peninsula, did not adjust to the norms of justice and equality. Juan de Lucena (born c. 1430, dies after 1500), one of the most distinguished *conversos* of his time, sent a letter to the Spanish monarchs, pointing out the abuses of the Inquisition.⁴⁹ Specifically, the Sepharadim criticized the {405} Scriptural basis that the Inquisition claimed as authority, as well as their judicial and criminal processes. « They say that God was Adam's and Eve's Inquisitor, because they ate from the forbidden fruit », but « God pretended to ignore what he could not avoid to know, in order to free a Criminal;⁵⁰ when the Inquisitors pretend to know what they ignore, [they do it] so to condemn the Innocent. »⁵¹ In many occasions, the culpability of the accused was determined through racist considerations, in other words, « from blood-line identities, assuming that [the accused] has Moorish blood, or that of the Jew, it is then believable that they do observe the Laws of Moses, or Muhammad. »⁵² Two fundamental elements deny judicial authority to those tribunals. In first place, while all ecclesiastic and civil tribunal allow the accused to confront and to examine the witnesses, the Inquisition tribunals deny the accused the right to confront and examine the witnesses. The witnesses « are total incognito to the prisoner, with whom they are not only prevented to confront, they are not even named. »⁵³ As we can gather, this made all defense virtually impossible. What we obtain is that one cannot attribute the said tribunals any legal authority:

Consider this, if these witnesses were to be admitted in a Tribunal that boasts to exercise the same jurisdiction than God? If their Depositions have the same circumstances, prescribed by God in the previously quoted Texts from Deuteronomy? If these Depositions and these Witnesses do not err in great manner? If such Witnesses, and such Depositions are enough to make the Accused a Prisoner, to oblige the Judges to take away their assets (*hacienda*), their honor, and their life, con with an ignominious and cruel death, making of the Fathers' godsons, their sons' orphans, the women widowers, and making everyone poor and miserable, forcing them to beg their sustenance through the streets and doors, and making them suffer the inclemency of Winter and the pernicious heat of the Summer for lack of shelter?

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 297-298.

⁴⁹ Véase, RAFAEL LAPESA, « Sobre Juan de Lucena », *Collected studies in Honor of Americo Castro's Eightieth Year* (Oxford: The Lincombe Lodge Research Library, 1965), pp. I-II.

⁵⁰ Es decir, que Dios finge no saber si Adan había comido el vedado fruto, para darle una oportunidad de confesar voluntariamente su culpa, y librarlo así del castigo; cf. *Noticias Reconditas y Posthumas*, pp.7.8.

⁵¹ *Noticias Reconditas y Posthumas*, pp. 7.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

{406} And the boast that the World judges, and make it call charity, and mercy, what is really cruelty and inhumanity? This cannot be.⁵⁴

The worth of these Witnesses is void, « making it possible to bring a false testimony, either because for hate, jealousy, wickedness, vengeance, and maybe for their own fear of becoming prisoners, and if they are (prisoners already, they do this so) to avoid through that route condemnation, thinking it would be unavoidable if they do not dispose of the other one accused. »⁵⁵ The said Tribunals constituted an affront to the judicial process. After analyzing the scriptural and judicial sources regarding this point, Juan de Lucena concludes:

Here we see two Laws, one Divine, the other Human, abolished by the Inquisitions of Spain, and Portugal, where there is no prescribed penalty for false Witnesses.⁵⁶

The other element invalidating the legality of these tribunals is the excessive torture suffered by the accused:

In the Inquisitions one ordinarily sees Jews confess of things that they never did, due to the intolerable rigueur of tortures, blaming themselves for inaudible and absurd accusations, and for not being able to bare the violence of the pain; and who would doubt if one were to put the very judges – though they may be innocent – through the same terrible shames, they would confess even more than what they have been accused for.⁵⁷

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In the Iberian Peninsula, the Hebrew was victim of a profound racial and religious hatred. The crimes that were imputed on them, just as the ritual homicide of children, « that only ignorant people, a rowdy lower-class, and wicked men, and others would embrace such badly founded suspicion, with no more indication than those who administer hatred, and conceived abhorrence against peaceful and humble people. »⁵⁸ The same can be said of other accusations and calumnies that this hatred engendered. Usque reveals to us his most intimate {407} feelings when he wrote: « Hypocrite, cruel and ravenous wolf you are, Spain, rapacious and flesh-eating wolves devour and continue on devouring my plush flock. »⁵⁹ Nonetheless, as it has been seen beforehand, Sepharadim chroniclers do not mention religious and racial hatred as a factor for the Inquisition and the Expulsion. Don Isaac Abarbanel (1437-1508), who

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁵⁷ *Las Excelencias de los Hebreos*, p. 423.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 431.

⁵⁹ *Consolaçam as Tribulaçoens de Ysrael*, fol. 7a. Para un caso típico de esa clase de hipocresía, Véase Stephan Gilman, « The Case of Diego Alonso: Hypocrisy and the Spanish Inquisition », *Daedalus*, Summer 1979, 135-143.

(60) *En su Introducción al libro de los Reyes*.

was present when the Edict of Expulsion was promulgated, attributed this decision to the king Fernando, instigated by the Queen, both moved by an authentic religious sentiment, not by hatred or malice.⁶⁰ Just like Machiavelli, he could have considered other far more mundane motives, as political and economic advantages behind the Expulsion.⁶¹ The same applies to R. Immanuel Aboab (c. 1555-1628), that when he examines the cause of the Expulsion, he declares: « By the grace of the Lord, they did not find in our people enormous vices or disloyalty that would cause them to expel us. »⁶² For the Sepharadim, more than being a slander towards the Hebrews, the Inquisition and the Expulsion hurt the Iberian people. On one side, the Sepharadí in their new communities did not lose their love and loyalty to the land of their ancestors:

From here we see that the kingdoms of Spain, already unpopulated, the poor vassals, the Royal Treasury overly exhausted, and what is more important, his Majesty of the Catholic King disposed of his faithful and loyal subjects, as it can be observed from those who fled the Inquisition, that after taking away their assets, their fame, and many times the lives of their Fathers, Mothers, Siblings, Wives, and children, and after looking themselves becoming ignominiously expelled to foreign lands, they do not cease to preserve their loyal and sincere, perfect and intact love that they always held for the King, and their Motherland, with such devout and extreme care, that it is not believable but only for those who has seen and felt this daily; the same things that I speak about Spain, I confirm about Portugal, without distinction or exception.⁶³

{408} The Hebrews were not merely limited to preserve the language and institutions of their ancestors developed in Spain and Portugal: « Sepharad » becomes a spiritual stamp that would distinguish the exiled and their descendants. Loyalty to « Sepharad » transcends a language and a culture, and it gives shape to a special bond with their old compatriots. Let's clarify this point. The Sepharadí not only did not keep hatred and rancor toward their old compatriots, but he treated them with a particular love and care. Isaac Cardoso tell us how the Sepharadim rescued the Portuguese who had become prisoners in Africa, and then they send them to their native land:

Sebastiano [king of Portugal], who had inherited the hatred of his parents toward a humble and persecuted Nation, was killed at twenty four years of age, with the flower of Nobility in the fields of Africa and Fez, where past kings had thrown the Jews in the expulsions from Spain. These Portuguese Nobles found refuge and protection [among the descendants of those Jews], and they wanted to be bought [as slaves] for mercy that they experienced; but they [the Jews] exempted their word, and sent them to the Kingdom; [the Portuguese Nobles] later were thankful for the rescue, and felt obliged to present them with precious and expensive gifts.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ *En su Introducción al libro de los Reyes.*

⁶¹ Véase *El principe*, cap. XXI.

⁶² *Nomología*, pp. 289-290.

⁶³ *Noticias Reconditas y Posthumas*, pp. 16-17.

⁶⁴ *Las Excelencias de los Hebreos*, p. 388.

The tradition to rescue their old compatriots and send them to their homes accompanies the Sepharadí to the New World. The next episode will serve as example. At the end of the 18th c., Surinám was an English colony. A Portuguese ship was captured by the French. The people on board, suffering of famine, were thrown in that island. Those poor souls, needy and unprotected, did not even know the language in that country. The Jews of Surinam, old descendants of victims of the Portuguese Inquisition, bring those unprotected poor people to their own homes. There, the Jews feed, give them clothing and provisions. Eventually, they lease them a ship that takes them to Lisbon. We must point that these Jews (being that this was considered an act of charity) refuse any compensation for incurred expenses. In a letter written to the community, November 11, 1797, D. Rodrigo de Souza Coutinho thanks them in {409} the name of the king of Portugal for their noble behavior and for not having forgotten their old fatherland⁶⁵. It is not difficult to imagine what would have been the luck of Jewish passengers, where destiny would have put them in a similar situation in Portuguese and Spanish lands.

* * *

The memory preserved by the Sepharadí of the Iberian peninsula is totally idyllic. Save for some allusions in the *qinnot* (« lamentations » sung on the 9th of Ab), the tragic episodes that mark the last two centuries [prior to 1492] in Spain are almost unknown. The canvas that Sepharadi grandparents paint in the memories of children is of a Sepharad with flowery gardens and homes full of sunlight, the *juderias* harbor Academies where the great sages of Israel cultivated the Torá and diverse sciences. There, the Hebrew was a prince, loved by the vast majority of the people, protected by the nobility, and with very few enemies, whom were immediately fulminated by the very the vigilant hand of God. Instead of suffering and tragedy, the fracture of *gerush* « Expulsion » is marked by portentous miracles, which protected the exiled, and cleared any obstacles that could be presented. Even the books of « history » written by Sepharadim are guilty of the same optimistic exaggeration. A modern researcher has already noted that the « literary » character — more than historical — of many episodes of this kind narrated by *Shebet Yehuda*⁶⁶.

The problem that we formulate, and whose solution is the main objective of this study is ¿why did the Sepharadí refused to accentuate its tragic experiences in Sepharad, instead of presenting us with an idyllic frame? ¿What is the strategy of this optimistic historiography?

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⁶⁵ Véase, Richard Gottheil, « Dr. David Nassy in Surinam », *Proceedings of the American Jewish Historical Society*, 9 (1901), 143-144.

⁶⁶ Véase, J.D. ABRAMSKY, *Al Mahuto ve-Tokhno shel Shebet Yehuda* (Jerusalem: Yedidi, s.f.).

One of the essential elements in Sepharadí thinking is the absolute autonomy of the people of Israel. This autonomy, which will last until the end of times, was guaranteed by the *berit* or « Alliance » {410} contracted by God and Israel, at the foot of mount Sinai⁶⁷. Besides its purely political and legal features, the concept of autonomy established that the destiny of the Israel depends exclusively to his own behavior. The misfortunes of the Hebrew people cannot be identified with elements that transcend Israel-God. When one tries to identify Israel's tribulation with the culpability of other nations is equivalent to deny Jewish autonomy, and as result, this means also the denial of the *berit* Israel-God. From this point departs Israel's preoccupation with internal factors.

The attitude of the Sepharadí towards anti-Semitism is linked with the afore mentioned. In first place, since there is no need to attribute the misfortunes of the people [of Israel] to external factors, anti-Semitism cannot be the true and real cause of Israel's tribulations. The « Anti-Semite » -- as for the Asur of yesteryear — must be conceived as a mere « instrument » — not as the cause — of Israel's suffering.

At a more pragmatic level, this attitude reflects a lack of worry with the « Anti-Semite » and « Anti-Semitism ». The *goy* « non-Jew », (Christian or Muslim) must not be conceived as an « adversary ». Quite the contrary, in Sepharadi literary tradition, the *goy* appears as a good example that would be useful for the Jew to learn to emulate⁶⁸. As a consequence, rabbis are careful to attribute the *goy* a blind hatred, thus not allowing the *goy* may be utilized as an excuse to dissimulate internal incompetence. In this manner, we arrive to amazing results. When R. Yisrael Moshe Hazzan (1807-1865) arrives in Rome in 1847, to take the seat of Chief Rabbi, he becomes aware that there was a certain animosity between Jews and Christians. It seems, that certain customs and behaviors give place to teasing from some Christians. The Jews maintained that this reflected hatred and dislike towards them. After carefully researching the matter, Hazzan concludes that the problem resided in the Jewish community. Specifically, he demonstrated that the teasing was due to an undignified behavior and bad customs rooted in the community that offended {411} Christian society, and which should have been reprimanded by the Jews . In a series of judicial decisions (*pesaqim*), Hazzan mandated the Jewish community to quit such behavior and customs⁶⁹.

One of the great dangers of anti-Semitism is the « reciprocity » that could be established between the victim and the aggressor: as the aggressor, the victim can come to identify all his problems and misfortunes with the « adversary ». In this manner, both can evade their own responsibility. One must consider the doctrine of Naphtalí Herz Wessely (1725-1805), one of the most luminous thinkers of

⁶⁷ Véase mi « Understanding the Covenant », *Tradition*, 9 (1967), 239-268; *Rabbi Yisrael Moshe Hazzan*, (Introduction), pp. 3-8.

⁶⁸ Véase mi « Sephardim in the Nineteenth Century: New Directions and Old Values », *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, 44 (1977), 47 n. 64; cf. *R. Nissim Gaon* (Heb.), ed. Shraga Abramson (Jerusalem, Mekize Nirdamim: 1965), p. 539 n. 3.

⁶⁹ Véase R. Roberto Bonfil, « Temuroth l'minhagim ha-datyim shel Yehudei Roma bitequfath kehunato shel R' Israel Mose Hazan », *Scritti in Memoria di Enzo Sereni* (Jerusalem, Editrice Fondazione Sa11y Mayer: 1970), pp. 228-251.

Ashquenazi Jewry. In his master work, *Dibre Shalom ve-'Emet* (Berlin, 5542/1782), he examines the low cultural and educational level of his coreligionist in those lands. Especially, he insists on the need to include in the programs of Jewish schools, Hebrew Grammar, and the study of ethics and humanistic values. The third chapter of his book, Wessely examines the causes of an ill program in those schools:

Thou shalt know that we are not guilty on this subject matter. We cannot accuse our souls of this injustice nor to criticize ourselves, but the people who were before us, more than a thousand years. They were the ones that were in our way, because they have hurt us very much with their decrees of kings and counselors. And with many wrong purposes they raised against us; so they could exterminate us and reduce us to dust. And they decreed against us measures contrary to reason. They were the ones who made us decline in the study of ethics, since they reduced their souls to dust, and oppressed their spirits within us. And since that moment forward, our hearts were obscured within our community and our hands were weakened to study ethics . . .

As if the nations had forced the Jew to spend his days in studying casuist [pilpul] discussions and not study Grammar and Hebrew ethics!!!!

{412} Hazzan, on the other hand, in a work with a similar title, *Dibre Shalom ve-'Emet* (London, 1845), exhorts his coreligionist to emulate the love to the nations, their languages and classic literature within their Hebrew studies⁷⁰. It is evident with all peoples and societies, one can find good and bad examples. The fundamental difference between Wessely and Hazzan resides — not in objective reality — but in modalities of perception and perspectives. I do not believe that would have been difficult to find in Herder (1744- 1803) for example, ideas and values that could serve as models from the « nations ,» and which Jews could emulate.

* * *

For the Sepharadí, as David Nassy (1747-1806) of Surinam, the most important Jewish thinker of the American continent, makes us understand, anti-Semitism is the effect of prejudice,⁷¹. More than a conflict between two spiritual systems, one Jewish and another Christian, anti-Semitism is the effect of certain mental mixed attitudes designated by the technical term « prejudice ». Such attitude consists to evaluate certain individuals, societies or spiritual systems (a) not in terms of a concrete reality, but according to certain abstract concepts that are supposed absolutes. Even more, this (fictitious) « reality » (b) must be measured according to certain utopist cannons, which are never applicable to the rest of human society. One must consider, as an example, some common notions of popular anti-Semitism. If one compares Jewish behavior with Christian behavior at the same level (instead of

⁷⁰ *Dibre Shalom ve-'Emet* (Londres, Samuel Meldola: 5605/1845), pp. 13-14.

⁷¹ Véase mi « David Nassy: On Prejudice and Related Matters », *Neveh Ya'akov: Jubilee Volume Presented to Dr. Jaap Meijer* (The Netherlands, Van Gorcum: 1982), pp. 87-116.

comparing a Jewish « archetype » with a Christian « archetype »), one could not find any base to judge Judaism and its religion pejoratively⁷². Quite the contrary, it would be easy to discover in every age and society, that Jewry counts with « individuals, given their talents, morality and sapience, deserve the same rank as many other {413} nobles from the Nations, and whom in several aspects are superior to many others, who with good fortune were able to obtained certain power, while [at the same time] it was denied to them [the Jews] »⁷³. The same can be said of the pejorative judgment the commoner has of Judaism. If instead of judging this religion based on abstract notions, and evaluated in terms of an utopist ideal, one would study the sources of Jewish spirituality — the Bible, rabbinic literature, etc. — and then comparing them with its Christian parallels, it would be easy to discover that no basis whatsoever exists to maintain a negative judgment of Judaism. In reality, anti-Semitism is the effect, not the cause, of prejudice. Those societies that practice anti-Semitism will continue to practice one or other form of social and spiritual prejudice, with or without Jews. If one cannot control it, this prejudice will end-up devouring that society or nation that nurtures it. « It is a fire that burns under its own ashes, and which soon or later it will consume any place where its entry is permitted »⁷⁴.

* * *

Since anti-Semitism emanates from prejudice, all the polemics and counter-accusations will be of little service to combat it. From this, the Sepharadí considers these polemics useless, and that is why he concentrates his efforts to find a *pragmatic* solution: How to effectively protect the members of the Jewish community? Since the end of the 18th c. And beginning of the 19th c., Sepharadí thinkers recognize that the new anti-Semitic waves will end-up exterminating many communities of old Europe⁷⁵. What differentiates the Sepharadí thinker is the pragmatic aspect in the solution that he proposes. Some thinkers, as David Nassy, maintain that the solution would be to emigrate to America (in his opinion, a country free of European prejudices). Others, the majority, as Joseph Salvador (1796-1873), R. Yehuda Bibas (1780-1852), Hazzan, R. Yehuda Alcalai (1798-1879) — much before the current Zionist movement {414} believed that it was time to establish a national Jewish home in the Holy Land⁷⁶.

In modern times, the attitude of the Sepharadí towards anti-Semitism was expressed by David Pardo, in a pamphlet *L'Hitlerisme et les Juifs* (Istanbul, 1933), published two months after Hitler took the position of Chancellor of the third Reich. Such pamphlet glows for its realism and pragmatism. This is the first objective evaluation of what Hitler's politics represented for European Jews. His analyses and solutions is a model of Sepharadí political thinking and its behavior in the presence of

⁷² Véase *ibid.*, pp. 95-97.

⁷³ *Lettre politico-théologico-morale sur les Juifs* (Paramaribo, ca. 1789), p. LXVIII.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. XXXVI.

⁷⁵ Véase R. *Yisrael Moshe Hazzan*, pp. 82, 117-118.

⁷⁶ Véase mi « Early Zionist Ideals Among Sephardim in the Nineteenth Century », *Judaism*, 25 (1976), 54-64.

a crisis created by anti-Semitism. Following, we will show the most interesting elements that Pardo develops. In first place, to dissipate all illusions about the seriousness of the situation, Pardo points to Hitler's character and its political movement. (a) Hitler is « a professional demagogue », whose political triumph represents « twelve years of intensive demagogic activity ». The very fact that he [Hitler] would attribute the ills of Germany on German Jews (only 1% of the German population), shows the psychological state of these individuals, particularly when one considers the marginal position that Jews had in the political and economic life of Germany. This diagnosis could only be factual « in the illusion of demagogues such as Hitler and Goebbels » (p. 4). To dissipate this illusion — maintained by many European Jews — that anti-Semitism will be limited to Hitler's expulsion of Jews from certain professions, Pardo declares that Hitler's politics has as an objective « the extermination of German Jews » (p. 3). Some coreligionist maintained, quite elusively, that these feelings did not belong to « Germany » but to a certain unauthentic and insignificant group. Pardo points that « more than 40 million Germans have applauded the Nazi electoral program » (pp. 4-5-). (b) Racist anti-Semitism *displaces* (and at the same time *replaces*) religious anti-Semitism. Our times are « the times of scientific anti-Semitism; the times of the Arian professor Duhring; Science and anti-Semitism — what a marriage! » (p. 6). It is important to differentiate between the public stand that Hitler projects and his real objectives. If for fear of the world {415} opinion, his partners would think difficult to execute such nefarious plans, they would find « oblique but ferocious methods » to mortally wound the Jew. Talking to his coreligionists, victims of Nazi propaganda, he warns: « but, Jews, you must be sure and certain, that Hitlerism will not leave out a single iota of its anti-Semitic program; he will execute through dubious and hypocritical methods to avoid the scandal and protests from the intellectual world » (p. 7). (c) Racist anti-Semitism will propagate outside Germany. In this manner: « May no Jew say: Hitler will not be able to hurt me! » This racist anti-Semitism will end up affecting other European nations. This is why those nations will not be able to evade their responsibility under the pretext of no intervention in the country's domestic policies. This international irresponsibility constitutes, in effect, a « a disinterested complicity » with Hitler's regime: « the European nations? Do not believe that the legal persecutions against the German Jews will not be able to affect you! Remaining in a disinterested complicity before this despicable spectacle of annihilation of all Jewish collectivity, do not believe that you would be serving justice and humanity! » Addressing himself to that political leadership who pretend to evade their responsibility under the pretext that those crimes are private matters of Germany, Pardo asks them: « A legislation exists to punish the criminals; Why would not the European nations create a legislation to punish collective crimes? » (p. 15). (d) What should be the Jewish response in the presence of this crisis? In first place one must recognize that this crisis has international dimensions « and one will not be able to fight it without international means » (p. 14). In this sense, the (political) unity of Israel plays a vital role. With this purpose, one must take into effect « a spontaneous mobilization of all Jewish organizations » at the international level. The European nations, always so observant as it concerns the protections of Jews, have no right whatsoever « to demand that we

remain in a [state] of lethargy, when our brethren are attacked and mistreated just because they are Jews » (p. 11). The indifference from those nations, who also wish to impose to their Jewish citizens, in the presence of racist anti-Semitism, struggles " against morality, a sense of justice and as a result, against civilization, because [Hitler's regime] preaches brutality instead of love to justice » (p. 12). Besides those external factors, Israel's unity was threatened by certain ideologies — which quite ironically came from the enemies of Israel — and which had been assimilated by some European Jews.

{416} As it is well known, one of the effects of the cultural « Enlightenment » of some European Jews is to have identified their Mediterranean and Middle-Eastern coreligionists as *Ostjuden* (« Oriental Jews »), in the pejorative sense of being intellectually and psychologically inferior, and this unable them to be educated, etc.⁷⁷. Ironically, some German Jews, such as the celebrated writer Jacob Wasserman (1873-1933), believed that they could escape the dangers of anti-Semitism by classifying their Russian and Polish as *Ostjuden* — the same epithet that they previously applied to other Jews. Those Jews insisted to « declare that they have nothing in common with those Jews of the Orient [Poland and Russia]; they have raised a demarcation line between them and Polish Jews; their newspapers classify them as inferior beings originating from a backward country, marked by physical and moral defects ». Unfortunately, racist anti-Semitism infiltrated into the very heart of the Jews, and this is why « they intensify their fight against the Eastern Jews [Poland and Russia] ». The partisans « of this ideology have sinned against the holy idea of Israel's unity ». In effect, when a Jew attacks his coreligionist suffers the danger to turn into a victim of the same abuse:

the unity of the Jewish nation should not be destroyed, matter transgressed due to separatist and selfish ends; the events in Germany plentifully confirm this assertion (p. 10).

Ultimately, to make front to this crisis, it is essential that the Jew established a national home in the Holy Land:

The characteristic aspects of Zionist ideologies is that they do not recognize the accidental situation of chance with Diaspora Jewry; the events in Germany have exposed to the civilized world the true tragedy of Jewish life among the nations; to be able to defend the right to life as a Jew, one must conduct a hard and defensive fight; the true lesson that one must gather on the events in Germany — it is the intensification of a constructive Jewish labor for a national Jewish homeland (p. 14).

{417} In conclusion, Sepharadí tradition identifies anti-Semitism as a divine punishment. The adversaries are only an instrument, not the cause, of the punishment. Besides maintaining a Jewish autonomy — Israel's destiny is not determined by external factors; this doctrine avoids feelings of resentment towards the adversary.

⁷⁷ Véase R. Yisrael Moshe Hazzan, pp. 105-117.

With this purpose, historians hurry to point out the exemplary behavior of the non-Jew. In certain sense, there exists a special duty on behalf of the victim to redeem his old oppressor. Rather than using reprimands and counter-accusations, prejudice must be fought with a certain behavior that reflects the true sense of love and biblical quality, as the Jews of Africa and Surinam did with the Portuguese prisoners. In this manner, one avoids all reciprocal relationship, where the victim uses the adversary as an excuse to evade his own responsibility. Yet far more important, one prevents what Canetti designates as « passing on the sting » — where the victims assumes the role of the aggressor, inflicting on others the same slur he had suffered⁷⁸. This phenomena is evident in German anti-Semitism. As Pardo had very well noted, the German people impute the Jews the same slurs and abuses that were imputed on them as a consequence of the First World War. After the war, they were imputed « with the lowest crime of all, the worst crime one can imagine — to having cause the explosion of the War ». European nations described [the German people] « as men of second class, materialist driven, men without originality or genius, cruel men, barbarians, humanity's copy-cats; these are the same accusations that you launch against us Jews ». The phenomenon « to pass on the sting » has as an objective to evade one's own responsibility:

thou hast lost the war; instead of raising your voice in protest against your generals — ill strategists — your politicians — men of short sight — thou hath preferred to place these responsibilities on Jewish shoulders; and after the defeat thou have enriched your anti-Semitic catechism with new elements (p. 9).

{418} Those « good Nazi patriots proclaimed that *der Ostjude* [« the Oriental Jew »] were responsible for the situation. And suddenly they launch the famous *Ostjudenfrage* [« the problem of the Oriental Jew »] (namely, Polish Jews) » (pp. 9-10).

The two elements that constitute the Sepharadi strategy — to assume total responsibility of their own destiny and refuse at every cost « to pass on the sting » — are both intimately linked: that who imputes his own misfortunes to others will end up « passing on the sting » to his neighbor. The Sepharadi does not respond with insults and calumnies that mimic the anti-Semite, simply, because he does not accept them. (To accept them would indicate certain parity). The following anecdote, told to us by Canetti during his childhood in Vienna, will illustrate this point. Once, he was walking along with another Jewish student of Polish origin, whose name was Kornfeld. On the way, another student yield an anti-Semitic insult. When Canetti relates this episode to his mother, she responds:

« That [insult] was directed to Kornfeld, not to you ». It is not that she wanted to comfort me. Simply, she did not accept the insult. For her, we were something better, that is, Sepharadim. Differing from my teacher's opinion, she did not want me to distance myself from Kornfeld, quite the contrary: « You must always walk with him », she told me, « so no one would dare to hit him ». For her it was impossible to

⁷⁸ *Vide supra*, n. 4.

conceive that someone would dare to hit me. . . as she had thought that the insult was not directed to me, I should protect [Kornfed] honorably⁷⁹.

Since the Sepharadí feels himself above that class of insults, he does not waste his time in polemics and counter-insults. Instead, he spends time to realistically evaluate the matter, assisting his brethren in danger, and finding a pragmatic solution that could resolve the crisis.

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⁷⁹ Elías Canetti, *The Tongue Set Free* (New York, The Seabury Press, 1979), p. 82).