

BOOK REVIEW:

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**Book: George L. Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism*,
New York, Howard Fertig, 1997, 2nd Ed., 277p.
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Structure

I am writing on a book that has been published a few decades ago; we are writing about a work published in 1978 and, republished in 1985. Right now, I am currently analyzing the reasons that several Jewish men were attacked, maimed and killed in New York City, New Jersey and, in Pennsylvania in this Donald Trump era. The hatred of them by different ethnic communities in the USA is real. Basically, no one can come to me with the concept that USA is a “Christian” nation so Jewish folk are safe. We know by studying history, for instance, that this is not true. The Christians have proven to be the best killers of Jews historically. This fact does not seem to disappear. The murder of Jewish individuals in New Jersey, on December 2019 has proven that people from any ethnic groups can be a murderer of Jews. It seems to me that the problem is ideological.

Consequently, I decided to put my eyes on the work of George L. Mosse, a German-Jew who was an historian in the USA at the University of Wisconsin, at Madison, for, I could say, his entire life. So, his book on the topic of racism and European hatred of the Jews remains a work of quality for those interested in this topic. To be succinct, I will divide my analysis in four Parts.

Content

The first part consists of the prologue and the introduction. For the Historian G. L. Mosse (1918-1999), racism is an ideology like Conservatism, Liberalism and Socialism. With Nazis Germany, the ideology of Racism had become superbly powerful. Only the defeat of Germany in World War II was able to destroy completely that ideology; the destruction of that ideology had ramifications in the USA and throughout all the continents of the world: wherever European imperialism had gone! We also understand that imperialism is an offshoot of European nationalism. Mosse, although conscious of the Modern European racist attitude was more geared towards the Africans, understood that racism within Europe, which did not have many Africans, was conceived on the belief that there is a certain minority that never assimilated totally in the European social fabric. They were there, visible by having different religious beliefs and customs.

Yes, I am talking about the European Jews. One hypothesis that I have on my mind for the hatefulness of Jewish people by Europeans is: what was the role of Christianity in promoting the respect of Jews? It seemed that the preaching to that effect was not really done. The Jew was the other. Mosse mentioned in his work that Christianity integrated racist views in Europe because it felt threatened by secularism...? So, Racism became the ideology defining who was considered normal and abnormal in Europe. In other words, and figuratively, are you in or out? This binary conception had become the basic justification to annihilate the European Jews. Mosse wrote: "Thus, the history of European racism must be seen as originating in the eighteenth century, [...].It was in the eighteenth century that the structure of racial thought was consolidated and determined for the next one and three-quarter centuries".

In the second part of his book, Mosse wrote that the real hateful focus of Europeans, in terms of racism, was the Africans. During Enlightenment there were several phenomena to explain, justify, and to help maintaining the attitude of hatefulness towards the Africans. The slave trade, slavery, imperialism and the genocidal policies towards the new subjected first possessors of the conquered land. The Trinidadian historian Eric Williams (1911-1969) wrote in his book entitled, "Capitalism and Slavery", that it was during the slave trade that the expression for Africans, "nigger", appeared. It came from the Portuguese word "negro", since they were the ones that begun the massive enslavement Africans and their crossings to the different colonies that they possessed. For Mosse, this period is not the worst for Jews because they were considered "European", and they could be assimilated into the European way of life. With European colonialism was born anthropology. That science had the goal to analyze the morphology of different ethnic groups and to explain their "backwardness". Based on those explanations came the justifications of enslavement, ethnocide and "expropriation" of the lands. As a matter of fact, this part of the book explained the beginnings of the massive writings on the races of Europe or on those oversea. The anthropological debates became means for "pure science", here I mean to learn about the human "specie"; but the truth here is that science and countless of other texts were about ethnicity and, they were meant to justify the national identity of several "nations"; the objective consisted in shaping intellectually and ideologically the cultural, social and the political phenomena of nationalism all over Europe.

It was the age of European imperialism and the rise of nation-states. White folks were supposed to have well organized nation-states, whereas the Africans and Asians were to be managed by the Europeans. As an example of this, Mr. A. Hitler (1889-1945) believed that the Indians should be ruled by the Europeans, and therefore, the German dictator was against their national liberation movement.

The third part deals with the scientific writings and the myths that were developed within the writings of different European intellectuals. We can say that during that era there was some writings that really had an objective of being objectively scientific. But the writings were often used to justify the economic and political might of Europeans. The nineteenth century saw the creation of writings on the birth of the nations, accompanied with a beautiful story of how an ethnic group or a language was born. Now we can mention a few names such as Arthur de Gobineau (1816-1882), Alphonse de Candolle (1806-1893), Comte Vacher de Lapouge (1854-1936). These three were Francophones (One Swiss man, two Frenchmen) and what it tells us, which is the objective of Mosse, is the hatred of the Jews is not a German invention. The Anglophones had their own too with men such as Robert Knox (1798-1862). Men like Knox, Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881), Charles Dickens (1812-1870) or James Hunt (1833-1869) were more concerned with the Africans than the Jews. Even Disraeli was Jew and the Prime Minister of England and its empire. So, the thoughts on every aspects of the non-Europeans, such as on the smell of their body, their intelligence, sexualities, morphologies or phenotypes, tongues, mores, economical and their political organizations was their main ideological preoccupation. These thoughts came also to affect those living in Europe with the different ones: the Jews. The Russian secret services of the Tzar created a fake and powerful document that became the “technical” evidence of the Jewish danger in Europe: “The Protocols of the Elders of Zion”. The Jews were perceived as being a different being and were not considered “real” citizens within the different nations of Europe. Therefore, they were a threat since they were not like the vast majority in the nation. The thinking was in the mind of most Europeans, “the Jews want to take over”.

Finally, the part four, it is concerned with the physical elimination of the Jewish population. From the Pogroms to the Shoah. Eastern Europe and Central Europe developed a racism against Jewish people too! That one was known to have been very lethal. It was not simply a discrimination; it often became a violent policy with the consequence of death. The Russians, Hungarians, Rumanians, Austrians, and the Germans “competed” on who is the most racist? And on who will be the best at getting rid of the Jews. Among these nations, the Jews were often hated and seen as a pure stranger. Even if they participated in the national war efforts of their nations, they were always considered as being suspect. Let us remember the colonel Alfred Dreyfuss (1859-1935) who was accused of betraying France; he was accused, demoted, found guilty and condemned; he was then sent to French Guyana. After a few years, France discovered that it was a Hungarian-French, a Christian, who sold the documents to the Germans. So, the Jews were perceived as being the vile one. Assimilation was not enough anymore. The Nazis had to do research to verify if you were really a “pure” Aryan since the sixteenth century. Clearly, Europeans became openly racists during this period. They were the colonizers, and they were forcing other foreign people to speak their language. Even the Russians were colonizers in Siberia, Asia, and Central Asia. It was a world of “White Christians”. Even if several Jews were successful financially, culturally, politically, and socially, it was not enough! World War One did hurt the Germans, the Russians, and the Austrians. Due to WWI, many Jewish peasants of Eastern decided to move West. By arriving massively during the years that the Central powers had lost the war and were dealing with a huge economic crisis that did not help them in anyways. They became the scapegoat for everything that did not work well: Jews were accused of being the leaders of Communism and of Capitalism. Adolf Hitler who really hated them, used his hateful ideological passion to unify Germany politically. This Moloch of the 20th century used anti-Semitism and his discourse on the grandeur of Europeanness to send back to war the German nation into their quest for a powerful Germanic Empire. On that path, the Germans have killed six million Jews with the help of several other European public authorities. The German were not alone in that process. Germans did not create racism and they were not the only racists of Europe. German had evolved culturally by constantly being in contact with all the other European writers and “wisemen”. Their racism was a European racism. And this is what Mosse wants us to understand.

The German specificity in that story is the pragmatism that was applied to the racist European ideology that was permanently nourished by the Teutonic nationalists. Mosse wrote: “The Nazis implementation of racial policy was essentially the climax of a long development which we have analyzed from its source in the eighteenth century”. Hitler decided to stop the thinking and to act. He was not the first one to try to eliminate a nation on Earth. His predicament was to kill people industrially. What characterized his immoral and unacceptable murderous activities were two aspects: bureaucracy and technology. Before ending this text, I would like to quote a very short text from the book entitled, “*Discourse on Colonialism*”, from the Martinican writer and politician Aimé Césaire (1913-2008): “People are surprised, they become indignant. They say: “How strange! But never mind -it’s Nazism, it will pass!” And they wait, and they hope; and they hide the truth to themselves, that it is barbarism, but the supreme barbarism, the crowning barbarism that sums up it all the daily barbarisms; that it is Nazism, yes, but that before they were its victims, they were its accomplices; that they tolerated that Nazism before it was inflicted on them, that they absolved it, shut their eyes to it, legitimized it, because, until then, it had been applied only to non-European peoples; that they have cultivated that Nazism, that they are responsible for it (p.36).” One thing is clear for Césaire, Mosse, and I, Adolf Hitler was an Austrian, a Catholic, and a European socio-cultural product. Through the work of Mosse, I understand better the European origin of German racism and the making of the German Moloch!

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