

# *Hilaire Belloc and The Jews*

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In trying to assess Jacques Maritain's thinking about the Jews in France, it may be a useful perspective to look at some of the same questions in a British context. John P. McCarthy, for example, opens his *Hilaire Belloc: Edwardian Radical* with:

Hilaire Belloc is chiefly known as a neomedievalist essayist-poet and Catholic apologetic historian, whose claim to admiration by our generation is compromised by his sympathy for authoritarianism and his anti-Semitism.<sup>1</sup>

But if Belloc was anti-Semitic, he was a very special anti-Semite who wrote a book to warn Jews of an increasing antagonism toward them, to criticize what he judged to be growing anti-Semitism in Europe, and to make a diagnosis of how this movement could be addressed.

That Belloc disliked some Jews and distrusted others there can be no doubt. During his pre-World War I experience (1906–1910) in the British House of Commons, he had been involved in the criticism of government leadership in what became known as the Marconi scandal. Thus cabinet ministers involved in that scandal such as Sir Herbert Samuel and the Isaacs brothers were repugnant to him. But to condemn him as anti-Semitic because of these opinions is to overlook the case that can be made for his concern toward Jewish people as a people.

Belloc's *The Jews* was published in 1922.<sup>2</sup> Note the context; he was writing it in the years just following the Great War and its

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<sup>1</sup>John P. McCarthy, *Hilaire Belloc: Edwardian Radical* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Liberty Press, 1978), 15.

<sup>2</sup>Hilaire Belloc, *The Jews* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922).

aftermath, the Treaty of Versailles. It came then shortly after the Balfour Declaration, in which the British government promised support for the establishment of a national homeland for Jews in the Holy Land. And the book was being written after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution had established the Soviet Union in a movement led, in Belloc's opinion, mostly by Jewish activists such as Leon Trotsky.

Belloc seems to have sensed a tendency toward anti-Semitism in himself, and *The Jews* was an attempt to exorcise it. He dedicated the book to Miss Ruby Goldsmith, his long-time secretary, "the best and most intimate of our Jewish friends to whom my family and I will always owe a deep debt of gratitude."<sup>3</sup> He had shown the manuscript to some Jewish friends and asked for their opinion, an indication, at least, of good intentions. They warned him it would not be well received in the Jewish community.

And no wonder. The book begins with the point that the Jews represent "a pressing problem" to which he does not have "any complete solution."<sup>4</sup> Yet his intention is to examine the question carefully and, in the name of truth, to focus on the reality of the problem. Belloc states that out of a fear of offending Jews, the English upper classes did not face the issue directly with Jews, preferring to talk behind their backs. Belloc is prepared to disrupt polite conventions for the sake of telling the truth as he sees it. Here Belloc is aware of the pressure of time, for in the early 1920s he foresees the existence of Jewish communities in the European nations and America as an increasing problem: "It is this force of things, this necessity for national well-being, and for the warding off of disorder, which has thrust the Jewish question today, upon a society still reluctant to consider it and still hoping it may return to its old neglect. It cannot so return."<sup>5</sup> Belloc specifies further that he will not refer to particular examples from public life that would make his book more readable and strengthen his case because such examples would excite enmity. Instead, he proceeds without polemic to make "an attempt at justice."

Reading his first chapter with the hindsight of seventy years it is obvious why any Jewish person would reject Belloc's book. Its premise is that the Jewish nation is an alien presence amongst the

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., v.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., vii.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., vii-ix.

countries in which it lives, and this very foreign presence in a national body with its own culture, tradition, race, and religion makes it a source of friction and antagonism. Belloc believes that Jewish people are like a foreign body in an organism that cannot be absorbed or assimilated. On the one hand, he calls upon the Jews to recognize themselves as a wholly separate nationality; on the other hand, he holds that non-Jews should also recognize the Jews as an alien thing but “respect it as a province of society outside our own.”<sup>6</sup>

Here was the stumbling block to the reception of his thesis by Jewish people. No one likes to be designated “a problem,” and to be a people forever foreign and alien in what one judges to be one’s own country (since for the most part the persons described were native) only adds to the pain. To appreciate Belloc’s extreme position, we might translate his Jewish problem to the “African-American” problem in our day, or to a Catholic problem, and see how the analysis fits. Yet as farfetched as it may appear in the 1990s, such was Belloc’s understanding of the Jews; less as a religiously committed people, more as a racially or ethnically identical group whose unity transcended national boundaries, and was more like a secret society than an ecclesial body.

The comparison to a secret society is, according to Belloc, not an exaggeration since foremost among the traits that characterize the Jews is their secrecy. This is one of the special causes of friction, and by it, Belloc meant such things as changing one’s name from a recognizable “Jewish” name to one which would blend in within the country of their adoption. For example, “Stanley for Solomon, Curzon for Cohen, Sinclair for Slezinger, Montague for Moses, Benson for Benjamin, etc., etc.”<sup>7</sup> Now the ordinary observer might judge that this is simply a practice many immigrants follow, that is, taking a more acceptable name in the country of their adoption. But to Belloc it smacked more of a conspiracy to hide connections with other family members with whom, as cousins or brethren, you continued to associate closely regardless of your new homeland.

### *Unintentional Insults*

This is typical of Belloc’s ambivalence. He praises by damning, and damns when he extolls. Seeking to refute the charge that Jews are

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 5.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 101.

guilty of vices such as cowardice, avarice, and treason, he provides counter examples of courage in support of Dreyfus, of the outstanding generosity of many Jewish philanthropic families and foundations. When he comes to treason he argues Jews cannot be treasonous, as the gentile citizen can be treasonous, since their allegiance is to their race, and so what would be treasonous in the case of a typical Britisher is simply being faithful or patriotic on the part of a Jew:

But it is clear that in all this there are examples of what, *in us*, would be treason. In him such actions are not treasons, for he does not betray Israel. But they all have an atmosphere repellent to us. They are things which if we did them (or when we do them) degrade us. They do not degrade the Jew.<sup>8</sup>

Now to any Jewish person such a remark would be devastatingly insulting. Yet it is consistent with Belloc's fundamental principle that Jews are an international alien nation living in various countries but more identified with themselves as a people than with the host country in which they are living. If Belloc is mistaken, if this premise is false, then his whole study collapses, for again and again this is his understanding and it provides the perspective from which he sees the presence of the Jew in Britain, France, Germany, or America. Obviously Jews say it is a false premise; for Belloc that is only what he would expect they might say. But the question remains: does his mistaken understanding of the Jew make him anti-Semitic? Certainly one cannot be surprised when a Jew answers: "Yes."

Let us carry the analysis further for there is more to be said on Belloc's behalf. In addition to "secrecy" being a special cause of friction, Belloc says:

The Jew individually feels himself superior to his non-Jewish contemporary and neighbour of whatever race, and particularly of our race; the Jew feels his nation immeasurably superior to any other human community, and particularly to our modern national communities in Europe<sup>9</sup>.

As Belloc comments, that is a shocking statement and one rarely made. Belloc acknowledges the talent of Jewish people; he praises their industry and concentration but it bothers him that, thinking themselves superior, they would regard him by implication as inferior. He does

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 79.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 108.

not articulate his own feeling so bluntly and in fact suggests that the idea the Jew should think himself “our superior is something so incomprehensible . . . that we forget the existence of the feeling.”<sup>10</sup>

Belloc does go on to review history and to suggest that part of the background for the expulsion of the Jews at different times and from different countries is that the non-Jew judges himself to be superior to Jews: “That statement, I know, will be as stupefying to the Jew as its converse is stupefying to us . . . Unless the Jews recognize the truth the trouble will go on indefinitely.”<sup>11</sup> This brings us back to the occasion of Belloc’s writing *The Jews*. He recognized that the friction between Jews and Gentiles was growing into a state of antagonism and he was hoping that his frank examination of the conflict would head off a catastrophe. In 1922 he was correct about the impending conflict, and, for whatever reasons, his warnings were not heeded. The Holocaust was just twenty years away.

### *Distinguishing Anti-Semitism*

One of the chapters of *The Jews* is devoted to the anti-Semite. Belloc certainly recognized the ugliness of anti-Semitism and condemned it. But the question can be asked, how did he distinguish his position of criticizing certain traits he associated with some Jews from the vulgar or common anti-Semite group to which he judged that he did not belong?

First he distinguishes two extremes in his society: one extreme refused to recognize any problem whatsoever relating to the Jews; the other, the anti-Semites, had but one motive—the elimination of the Jewish race. Belloc judged himself to be somewhere in the middle acknowledging that the presence of the Jews in society constituted a problem, but seeking peace, not antagonism. As one reads this chapter seventy years after its publication, the thought occurs that Belloc saw in himself some tendencies toward the second group and part of the motivation for his study was to distance himself from that group, all the while knowing from the inside, as it were, the motivations that smouldered in the hearts of these Jew haters. His litany of the sorts of causes that created the second group: secrecy, shrewd financial

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 108.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 116.

dealings, parliamentary corruption, and so on, is not at all different from the charges he had made in his own indictment of what he judged to be an alien nation in European society.

But there *is* a difference. The true anti-Semite hates Jews as such and sees no good whatsoever in their activities:

He detests the Jew as a Jew, and would detest him wherever he found him. The evidences of such a state of mind are familiar to us all. The anti-Semite admires, for instance, a work of art; on finding its author to be a Jew it becomes distasteful to him though the work remains exactly what it was before.<sup>12</sup>

As Belloc reiterates, his intention is to face the problem of the growing friction and propose the direction the solution should take. What makes for shattering unease in reading the chapter in the early 1990s is how prescient Belloc was in his diagnosis of the growing movement to be realized in the Third Reich of the late 1930s and the early 1940s:

For instance, any German to-day to whom you may talk of his great disaster [defeat in World War I] will answer by telling you it is due to the Jews: that the Jews are preying upon the fallen body of the State; that the Jews are "rats in the Reich." For one man that blames the old military authorities for the misfortune following the war, twenty blame the Jews, though these were the architects of the former German prosperity, and among them were found a larger proportion of opponents of the war than in any other section of the Emperor's subjects.<sup>13</sup>

Belloc's complaint about the Jewish response to this anti-Semitism was that it had worked for a time, but no longer. In his judgment, what had seemed only a fad perpetrated by a few was now a menace. "The anti-Semitic movement is essentially a reaction against the abnormal growth in Jewish power, and the new strength of anti-Semitism is largely due to the Jews themselves."<sup>14</sup> To us this sounds like blaming the victim for the persecution, but in the context of 1922 to Belloc it seemed that the Jews, by dismissing the threat of anti-Semitism as "hopelessly ridiculous," were preparing for their own suffering. He was calling attention to a danger, and the response of ignoring the

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 148.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 157.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 159.

danger and dismissing his warning as anti-Semitic did not bode well for the future. He then proceeded to examine further events that were contributing to the growing antagonism.

*Zionism and Its British Supporters*

Bolshevism, to which we have already alluded, was a factor but not the only one. Another factor was Zionism. Today, more than forty years after the establishment of the state of Israel, some of Belloc's fears seem without basis, the result of his prejudice. He did not believe the Jews were capable of fighting for their own country and so the establishment of a Jewish national homeland he felt was to be borne by British armed forces. And this he judged Britain did not owe the Jews:

If a Zionist experiment is necessary, or advisable, then let it be made in such a fashion that it can be dependent upon a Jewish police and a Jewish army alone. Let it not rely upon a foreign protectorate, which will not last long, which is a weakness to the directing power, and which creates a false position.<sup>15</sup>

Belloc was mistaken in failing to see that the Jewish people were prepared to fight, and succeed in fighting, for Israel; he was right, however, in prophesizing that such a state would be a source of continuing trouble, and that Muslim and Christian peoples would resist Jewish control of their Holy Places. As Belloc closes the chapter he returns to an old wound:

It is indeed deplorable that of the whole world of Jews—from crowds of Jews eminent in administration, and political sciences, known for their upright dealing and blameless careers—Mr. Balfour's Jewish advisers (whoever they were) should have pitched on the author of the Marconi contract and spokesman of the famous declaration in the House of Commons that no politicians had touched Marconi shares.<sup>16</sup>

This politician was Sir Herbert Samuel, first High Commissioner of Palestine<sup>17</sup> who truthfully told the House of Commons that cabinet ministers had no investments in the British Marconi corporation to

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 244.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 245.

<sup>17</sup>Cf. Conor Cruise O'Brien, *The Siege: The Saga of Israel and Zionism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), 155ff.

which they had awarded a huge contract, all the while concealing that some in fact had invested in the American Marconi company that was financially connected to its British cousin.

One of the pieces of evidence that has been offered to show Belloc was anti-Semitic has been the way some Jews were depicted in his novels. *The Postmaster-General* (1932) was a slightly disguised caricature of government dealings in the awarding of contracts, something about which Belloc had good reason to be cynical; but to be critical of corruption when it occurs and to dislike some Jews for their shortcomings in itself is not to be anti-Semitic. A. N. Wilson in his 1984 biography of Belloc quotes from a letter Belloc wrote in 1924, not long after *The Jews* was published:

There is not in the whole mass of my written books and articles, there is not in any one of my lectures (many of which have been delivered to Jewish bodies by special request because of the great interest I have taken), there is not, I say, in any one of the great mass of writings and statements extending over twenty years, a single line in which a Jew has been attacked as a Jew or in which the vast majority of their race, suffering and poor, has received, I will not say an insult from my pen or my tongue, but anything which could be construed even as dislike.<sup>18</sup>

Here we have Belloc's judgment on himself that he is innocent of anything that would suggest anti-Semitism, but how valid is that judgment? Could Belloc be deceiving himself in this matter? Was it that he was insensitive to some of the things he said? By way of answering this, I find myself embarrassed by his insensitivity in everyday language. Again, according to A. N. Wilson, he would refer to *The Jews* as "my admirable Yid book"<sup>19</sup> and in his poetry he would unthinkingly, or at least I hope unthinkingly, write:

Who tried to put to death Our Blessed Lord  
But, on the third day, as the Gospel shows,  
Cheating their machinations, He arose:  
In Whose commemoration, now and then,  
We persecute these curly-headed men.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>A. N. Wilson, *Hilaire Belloc* (New York: Atheneum, 1984), 188. The letter is dated September 6, 1924.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 258.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

How may we reconcile the Belloc who was concerned with the growing problem of anti-Semitism and, I believe, sincerely wished to work towards a solution, with the person who could toss off prejudiced remarks? What was there in the time, or the character of Belloc which made him seem so prejudiced when his conscious intention and belief was to be the opposite? The answer lies in several directions.

Belloc was a belligerent Catholic and he absorbed the atmosphere of the post-Vatican I and pre-Vatican II era where being a Catholic meant asserting your opposition to whatever he judged to be non-Catholic. For what was non-Catholic was to him anti-Catholic and had in some way to be resisted. In his defense, we might observe that he had suffered from anti-Catholic prejudice as a student at Oxford and was sensitive to the continuing anti-Catholic tendencies of British society as a whole. He also was always under pressure to pay his bills. He worked constantly turning out essays, histories, novels, special assignments, and lectured as he travelled. Yet he never could “get ahead” of his expenses. That he would envy those who were more financially successful than he was, especially in what he regarded as sharp practices, is understandable if not defensible. Some Jews bothered him and that resentment showed through in his conversations and writings.

If Belloc’s casual remarks showed prejudice or a tendency toward resentment, what is the point of attempting to defend him from the charge of anti-Semitism? I think it useful as a prerequisite to a better understanding of the written record and of his intentions. *The Jews* came out in a second edition in 1927. There were no significant changes, but the fact that it was re-issued shows that some people were reading it and were convinced by something in Belloc’s analysis. Much more significant was the third edition (1937) for this came with a whole new introductory chapter commenting on the events of that time.<sup>21</sup>

In that introduction there were three main factors that engaged Belloc’s attention: the first was the extension of the Communist Revolution, “the Jewish Revolution,” from Russia to Spain, and the reaction against the insurgents under the command of General Franco; the

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<sup>21</sup>Belloc, *The Jews*, third edition with a new introductory chapter (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1937). References to this chapter will be in Roman numerals.

second factor was what Belloc called “the violent reaction against the European Revolution of the government of Berlin, with the consequent exile and persecution of Jews throughout the German Reich”; and thirdly, what he called “the maturing of the Zionist experiment in Palestine.”<sup>22</sup>

### *Weak Responses to Persecution*

Writing in August 1937, Belloc was blind to the full implications of Hitler’s actions against Jewish people. Today in the light of the horror of the Holocaust it is upsetting to read how dispassionately Belloc can examine the injustices of the situation. Yes, he recognized there was injustice and judges in the long run the Nazi movement will be a failure: “I say this apart from the fact that Israel is eternal, and Nazidom most certainly not eternal.”<sup>23</sup> But he does not become eloquent in his condemnation; he asserts that in theory a state may exclude Jews from certain professions, but in practice the way they were doing it was unjust because it broke an implied contract and there was no provision for compensation for those who had invested their savings and life to prepare for such a profession. And he recognized the efforts to prevent marriages between Jews and non-Jews was unrealistic and so futile, for who is to say who has or has not Jewish blood?

The attempted prohibition is mechanical and that alone is sufficient to make it futile as applied to human affairs, for human affairs are essentially organic and non-mechanical, and, apart from that, it relies upon necessarily insufficient evidence.<sup>24</sup>

Thus there is criticism but not a ringing condemnation such as he had made at the beginning of the chapter when he reviewed the atrocities of the government forces in Spain against priests and nuns in the opening phase of the Spanish Civil War. It is fascinating to read his analysis of this war more than fifty years later and see how well he grasped the forces of propaganda working to promote support for the so-called International Brigade which had come together to assist the Communist cause. Belloc took in stride the help the Germans and

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., xxiv.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., xliii.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., xliv.

Italians were giving Franco as part of the natural play of forces whose interest it was to defeat the Communist, that is, anti-Catholic side.

Curiously, in analyzing the German persecution of the Jews, Belloc does not name Hitler; he refers to the Nazis, but he uses the terms “the Prussian Government” or “Berlin” where we would say Adolf Hitler. The analysis is cold, as if from another planet, when he asks of the Nazi policy: “What effect will it have upon a solution of the Jewish question? Is it an advance towards a just solution of that question or not?”<sup>25</sup> And he replies to his question by saying he is not asking whether or not the Nazi action is a just solution, for, as he continues, “it is not a solution at all.”<sup>26</sup> Then in a way that from our historical standpoint is totally unfeeling about what was just the beginning of later atrocities he adds:

There is no doubt that the Nazi attack was sincere. There is no doubt that *in the eyes of its authors* it was provoked by a situation which *they* thought intolerable.

But can it be fruitful?<sup>27</sup>

Then he continues as if he took some satisfaction in the fact that the shock of the Nazi oppression of the Jews had “cleared the air.” It was no longer impolite, as it were, and had seemed in 1922 when he first tried it “to discuss the Jewish question.” But having said that he does criticize the attack as being neither thorough nor final, first and secondly “you will not achieve a victory until you have some moral consecration for it” and here he begins a denunciation of the injustice of the program.

But injustice of this kind cannot solve any problem, and there is grave and glaring injustice in the Nazi policy against the Jews, for these two simple reasons as familiar to Greek philosophy as to Christian conscience: first, that justice concerns the individual soul, not a type or race. Secondly, that you cannot justly destroy a bilateral agreement by a unilateral declaration.<sup>28</sup>

At first it seems that all Belloc condemns is a sort of breaking of an agreement, a violation of a contract, and he does review that part of

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., xxxix.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., xi.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., xl.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., xli.

it. But then as he warms up to the subject he ridicules the absurdity of the Nazi racial policy recognizing it was rooted in the social theories of “an eccentric Frenchman of the name of Gobineau” and says:

you cannot—even if this eccentric Frenchman were divinely inspired—make certain that the people living in Germany who did not happen to be Jews are of this peculiar and god-like sort. It is tomfoolery to pretend it. It is racial vanity gone mad.<sup>29</sup>

And here is where Belloc takes off on the insanity and irrationality of Nazi doctrine and the consequences of the suffering it caused. He recognized that in the thirties some defenders of German policy stressed the anti-Communist character of the attack, but he adds:

Berlin has not made itself a rallying point even for anti-Communism, as it might have done had it lucidly distinguished between the Jewish element in Communism and the Jewish race as a whole.<sup>30</sup>

### *Promised Land as Refuge*

Turning to Zionism, Belloc concedes in the light of the persecution of the Jewish people there is more reason for a national homeland as a place of refuge. His treatment of Balfour is more understanding than it had been in the 1922 chapters for he acknowledged the motives of Balfour were of the highest patriotism: to solidify a Jewish sympathy for the allied cause in the Great War. But Belloc judged himself correct in his anticipation of Arab resentment in the region. In the light of the continuing troubles for the state of Israel since 1948, Belloc can be credited with an understanding about the difficulties still being faced. Drawing on his historical knowledge, Belloc focused on the significance of Syria as a key player in the troubles of the area. “Islam hates and despises the Jews, and what we were doing in Palestine was to thrust an increasing body of Jews under the protection of British power, into the flesh of Islam.”<sup>31</sup> Belloc is also concerned about the care of the Holy Places and knows that this will be a continuing source of irritation. What Belloc did not foresee was that the British would withdraw from Palestine and the state of Israel would be born in 1948

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., xlv.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., xlvii.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., lii.

well able to protect itself. His sympathies are more with the Arabs and he regrets that the British misled the Arabs. "The truth is, as everybody knows, that we promised the Arabs their country if they would help us against the Turks. We then broke our promise."<sup>32</sup> Belloc recognized that summer of 1937 that "the thing remains unsettled and a full immediate solution of the problem remains impossible."<sup>33</sup> Thus his judgment has been confirmed.

As we noted at the beginning Belloc was calling attention to what he recognized as a growing problem after World War I, and he was attempting to propose a solution to the existing hostility but which was considered to be a breach of etiquette to talk about. His solution to treat the Jews as an alien people, even a privileged people since for him they would not be subject to conscription in a time of national emergency, was no solution. It was a form of segregation and, as his most sympathetic biographer Robert Speaight says, *apartheid*.<sup>34</sup> It was totally unrealistic and if it worked at all, and it could not really, it would have been an injustice. Here is the basis for the charge of anti-Semitism that sticks despite Belloc's good intentions and his repudiation of what he termed vulgar anti-Semitism.

### *The Contrast to Maritain*

One is struck by the contrast between Maritain and Belloc on the Jewish question. In Maritain's writing the religious vocation of the Jewish people is central; it is always the mystery of Israel and her role in God's plan for history. It is this respect for the Jews as a religious people that is missing from Belloc's writing. I cannot say he never alludes to the religious dimension. But if he does, it is in the way of a belligerent Catholic putting down the opponents of his religion. Friends of Belloc always praise him as a speaker, not just as a formal after-banquet lecturer, but as someone who in social situations dominated a room with his wit and songs; for most of his years he had great power and *joie de vivre*. This carried over into most of his

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., lv.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., liv.

<sup>34</sup>Robert Speaight, *The Life of Hilaire Belloc* (London: Hollis and Carter, 1957), 454. This biography published shortly after Belloc's death in 1953, as well as Wilson's biography were of great help to me. I am also grateful for Frederick D. Wilhelmsen's *Hilaire Belloc: No Alienated Man* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1953), a profound and poetic study.

expository writing. (I find his novels, however, virtually unreadable.<sup>35</sup>) This forceful, dynamic quality carries an argument well but it does not serve as well for the appreciation of the religious life of others. There are brilliant insights but not the carefully balanced evaluations which bring out the merits of both sides of a controversy.

For example, Belloc touches in passing on the Dreyfus affair. Here his concern is not that Captain Dreyfus might be the victim of injustice via questionable evidence; rather, he is concerned that the military establishment, which had become a career vehicle for many Catholics when other government careers were closed to them after the Revolution, was damaged in virtue of the liberal campaign to establish Dreyfus's innocence. Belloc had his priorities and at the top of the list he instinctively reacted to protect the interests of his Church as he perceived them.

If it might be said I had a prejudice even before I set out to read *The Jews*, it was to try to defend Belloc against the charge of anti-Semitism that other students of Belloc had made. At the finish I have to agree in some way Belloc was anti-Semitic *malgré-lui*; not in the vulgar sense that he condemned, but in a more subtle sense of failing to appreciate the full temporal and religious vocation of Israel in history.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>After this paper was completed, a footnote in the excellent study by Michael H. Markel, *Hilaire Belloc* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982) called my attention to a chapter "Chesterbelloc and the Jews" by David Lodge in *The Novelist at the Crossroads and other Essays on Fiction and Criticism* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1971). Literary critic Lodge tends to place more blame on a pre-Vatican II tradition of anti-Semitism amongst Catholics than I would in his assessment of the anti-Semitism of Chesterton and Belloc, but our conclusions are similar: Chesterton and Belloc despite their disclaimers of vulgar anti-Semitism generally disliked the financially successful Jews of their generation. A feature of Lodge's criticism is the analysis of how Belloc depicted Jewish characters in his novels, often with illustrations by G. K. Chesterton. Lodge also notes the general prejudice against Jews in literary figures such as T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, John Buchan, D. H. Lawrence. However he gives a "renegade Catholic" James Joyce full marks for his treatment of Leopold Bloom in *Ulysses*.

<sup>36</sup>For a contrast to the spirit of Belloc see "On Anti-Semitism" (1944-46) in *Jacques et Raïssa Maritain, Oeuvres Complètes*, vol. 8 (Paris: Éditions Saint-Paul, 1989), 564.