

ANTISEMITISM DEFINITION

Antisemitism is the term for hatred of Jews as a group or a concept. Hatred of Jews has existed since ancient times, and in the nineteenth century it was being influenced by modern scientific ways of thinking. The word “antisemitism” was coined in Germany by political activist Wilhelm Marr to represent this newer way of thinking. “Semitism” supposedly expressed all things Jewish, since at the time national groups were frequently defined by their language and the traditional language of Jews is Hebrew, which is a Semitic language. Of course there is no such thing as “Semitism” and all speakers of Semitic languages never belonged to the same national or ethnic groups.

Antisemitism may take the form of religious teachings that proclaim the inferiority of Jews, their supposedly evil nature, or other negative ideas about Jews. It may include political efforts to isolate, oppress, or otherwise injure them. It may also include prejudiced or other stereotyped views about Jews derived from racial or other ideologies.