

Scapegoating the `Other'

By David Seljak

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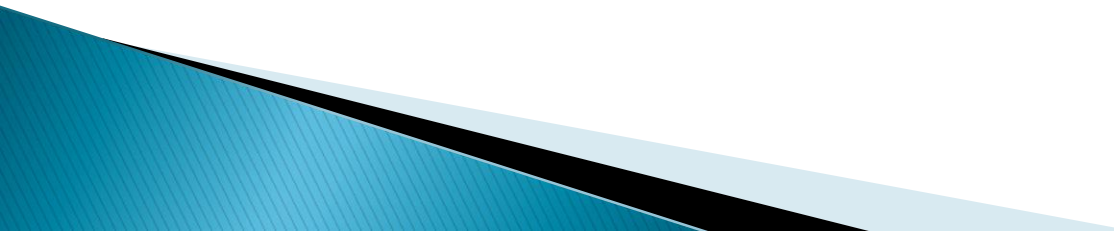
Third Age Learning Kitchener-Waterloo

RIM Park, Waterloo, January 12, 2015

Scapegoating: a definition

»» Like you couldn't look this up on Wikipedia...

Merriam–Webster

- ▶ 1: a goat upon whose head are symbolically placed the sins of the people after which he is sent into the wilderness in the biblical ceremony for Yom Kippur
 - ▶ 2a: one that bears the blame for others
 - ▶ b: one that is the object of irrational hostility
- 

Common usage

- ▶ One who bears the blame for another AND
- ▶ One who is the object of *irrational* hostility

- ▶ By using the term, we make important judgments
 - Person is *innocent*
 - Person is *unfairly* blamed
 - Hostility and punishment are therefore *unwarranted*

JP Morgan CEO condemns 'five years of scapegoating' of banks

- ▶ Jamie Dimon uses Davos to criticise regulatory response to crisis and strongly defend role of financial sector since 2008
 - *The Guardian*, Wednesday 23 January 2013
- Jamie Dimon, chief executive of the Wall Street bank JP Morgan, has made a spirited defence of the global financial sector, insisting many banks have been "ports in the storm" since 2008, and criticising regulators' response as **"five years of scapegoating"**.
 - <http://www.theguardian.com/business/2013/jan/23/jp-morgan-jamie-dimon-banks-davos>

The 2008 GFC and scapegoats

- ▶ The Big Short (2015) movie
- ▶ Creators of the crisis got off with few consequences and we sent on to blame "immigrants, the poor and, for the first time, teachers."
- ▶ Michael Lewis, *The Big Short: Inside the Doomsday Machine* (2010).
- ▶ You can read a chapter here:
 - <http://www.vanityfair.com/news/2010/04/wall-street-excerpt-201004>

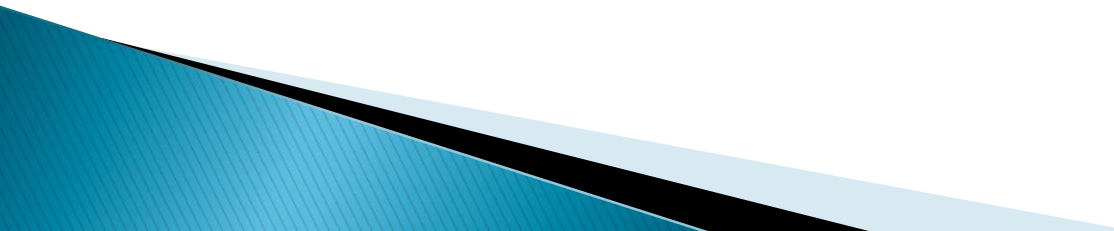
Two concepts of scapegoat

- ▶ “Bad apple”
- ▶ Usually lower down on the ladder
- ▶ Sometimes willing victim (Scooter Libby)
- ▶ Often hides systemic problems (e.g. Abu Grahیب)
- ▶ Defined as a “type”
- ▶ Imagined as monolithic
- ▶ Seen as “other,” not like ourselves
- ▶ Justifies isolation, marginalization, and even violence

INDIVIDUAL

COMMUNAL

Scapegoat has to be the “Other”

- ▶ When relations between “us” are strained, it is best to blame “the Other”
 - ▶ Insider/Outsider dynamics
 - ▶ The Other becomes all that we are not
 - ▶ The Other is dehumanized, which leads to, or at least legitimates, violence
- 

Scapegoating as social phenomenon

»» Birth of a Concept

Scapegoating in the Bible

- ▶ Leviticus 16
- ▶ Context: Purity and Pollution
- ▶ How to approach the Lord in the temple
- ▶ Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)
- ▶ Aaron to bring from Israelite community
 - Two male goats
 - Cast lots to determine which one will be sacrificed and which will be scapegoat
 - First is sin offering, second is sent into wilderness

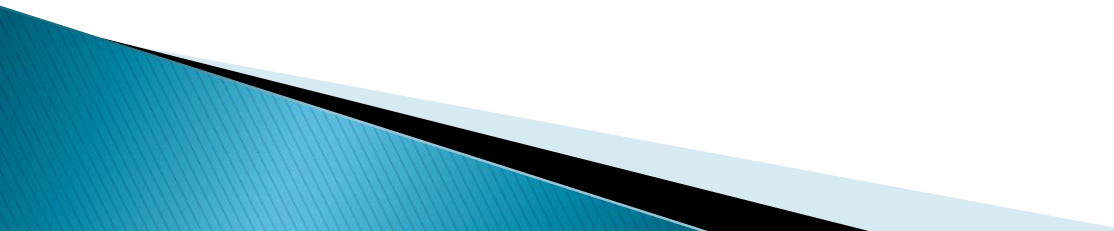
Leviticus 16: Yom Kippur

- ▶ 20“When Aaron has finished making atonement for the Most Holy Place, the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall bring forward the live goat. 21He is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites—all their sins—and put them on the goat’s head. He shall send the goat away into the wilderness in the care of someone appointed for the task. 22The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a remote place; and the man shall release it in the wilderness.

Jesus and Atonement Theology

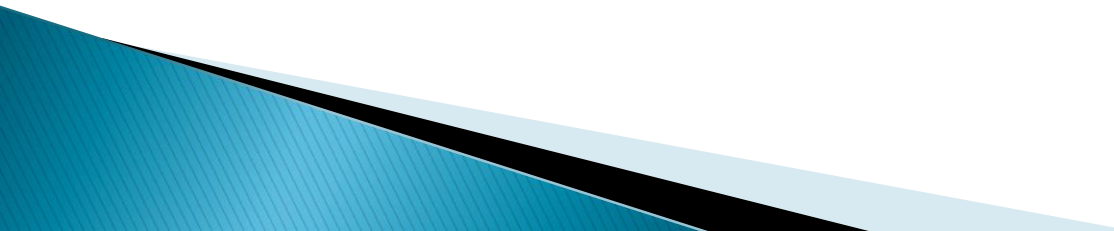
- ▶ Rom. 3:23–25;
- ▶ There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵ God presented Christ as a **sacrifice of atonement**, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith.

Jesus as the Perfect Sacrifice

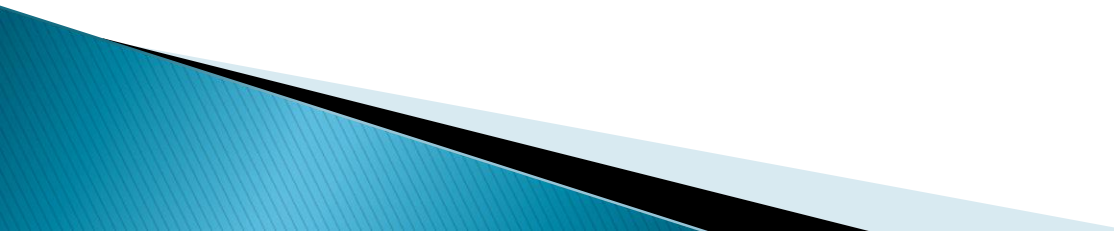
- ▶ Hebrews 9: Christ preempts Yom Kippur ceremony. Enters the Holy of Holies of the tabernacle via his own blood (rather than blood of the sacrificial animal)
 - ▶ Heb. 10:10 “And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”
 - ▶ See also Hebrews 13:11–12.
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Rene Girard, the Scapegoat

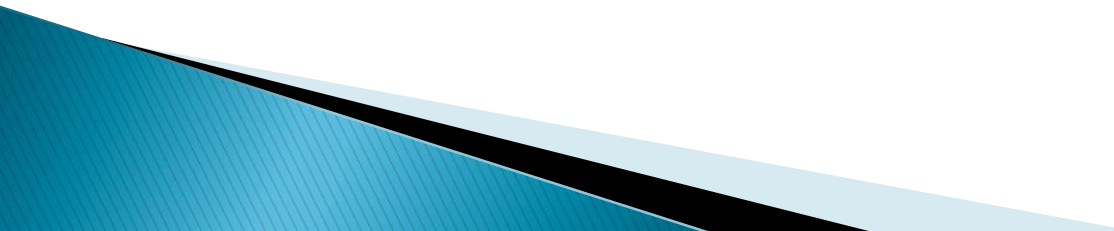
- ▶ Stanford French professor
 - ▶ One of the 40 *immortels* of the prestigious Académie Française
 - ▶ Died Nov. 4, 2015, at the age of 91
 - ▶ Author of almost 30 books

 - ▶ *Violence and the Sacred* (1972; 1977 in English)
 - ▶ *The Scapegoat* (1986)
 - ▶ *Job: The Victim of His People* (1987)
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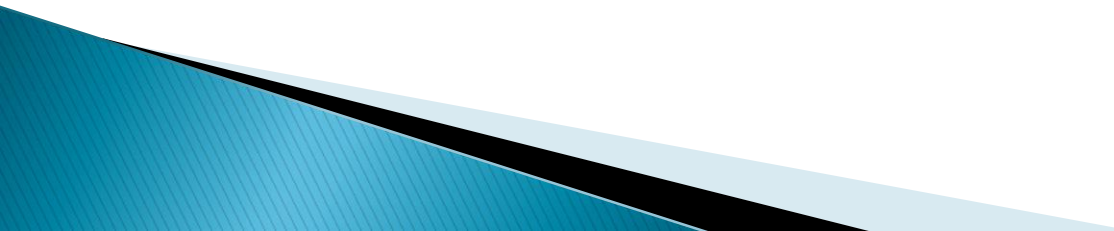
Rene Girard: Scapegoat theory

- ▶ Mimetic desire: we unconsciously mimic others -- including their desires
 - ▶ Internal mimetic desire (to be like people close to us) inevitably leads to desiring the same things
 - ▶ We may even desire to *become* the other person (metaphysical desire)
- 


Desire, rivalry, and scapegoating

- ▶ Metaphysical and internal mimetic desire lead to rivalry, envy, and social tension
 - ▶ When the tension threatens whole society, we look for a scapegoat
 - ▶ Program of violence against a common enemy strengthens communal ties
- 


Scapegoating as unconscious activity

- ▶ Process must remain unconscious: victim can never be recognized a “innocent”
 - ▶ Victim is seen as monstrous, degenerate, evil, etc. who has transgressed a legitimate law
 - ▶ And hence *deserves* the punishment
- 

Scapegoating and the origins of civilization

- ▶ Violence of scapegoating brings unexpected peace, which allows all of culture to develop
 - ▶ Vs. Enlightenment ideal that natural “man” became civilized through the “social contract”
 - ▶ Founding of society is brutal, irrational, and unconscious
 - ▶ Society is founded on a murder: Freud’s *Totem and Taboo*
- 

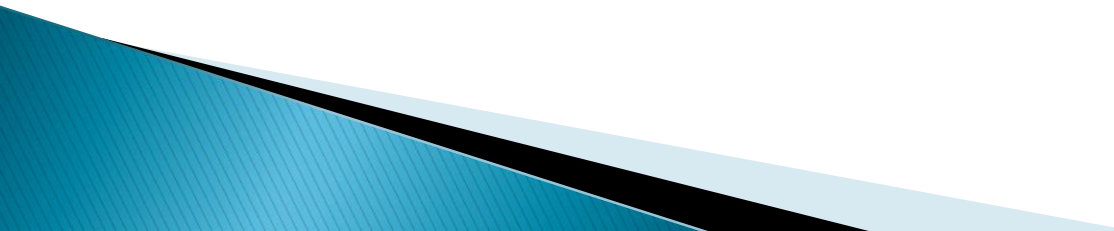
Scapegoating, religion, and ritual

- ▶ Unexpected peace is experienced as a marvel or miracle
 - ▶ Religion then celebrates this peace (victims often become gods)
 - ▶ Sacrifice rituals are re-enactments of the scapegoating murder
 - ▶ Myths justify and explain these rituals: myths hide the scapegoating murder and hence keep the mechanism unconscious
- 

Girard on Jesus

- ▶ Hebrew Bible is ambivalent on sacrifice (e.g., the Prophets)
- ▶ Jesus as scapegoat
 - great social tension
 - innocent victim
 - unjust punishment
- ▶ However, Jesus is recognized as the innocent scapegoat
- ▶ Jesus opposes scapegoat violence by proposing peace: “turn the other cheek”

But scapegoating continues

- ▶ People reject Jesus's message of non-violence
 - ▶ Christianity becomes new mechanism of scapegoating
 - ▶ Apocalyptic predictions now coming true because of human violence (not God's judgment)
 - ▶ Modern warfare plus scapegoating has doomsday potential
- 

A Sociological Reading of Girard

- ▶ The power of scapegoating comes not just from its “negative” function of releasing hostility on the scapegoat.
- ▶ Its power comes from its “positive” function of allowing the community to articulate and celebrate its core values, a role that Emile Durkheim gave to religion.
- ▶ Scapegoating, like religion, allows people to celebrate their foundational ideals and values.
 - It unites people emotionally over shared “sacred” values.

Celebrating our values through Islamophobia

Imagining Muslims as	Allows us to celebrate ourselves as
Extremist	Reasonable
Violent	Peace-loving
Bent on world domination	Respectful of others
Hierarchical	Egalitarian
Patriarchal (anti-woman)	Committed to Human Rights
Irrational	Rational
Backwards (living in the past)	Future-oriented
Pre-modern	Modern

Note: Of course, not every criticism of Islam is a sign of Islamophobia.

Scapegoating positive function

Scapegoating Muslims as

Violent
Aggressive
Hierarchical
Patriarchal
Anti-woman
Irrational
Backward
Pre-modern

Allows us to celebrate ourselves as

Compassionate
Peace-loving
Egalitarian
Liberated
Human-rights loving
Rational
Future-oriented
Modern

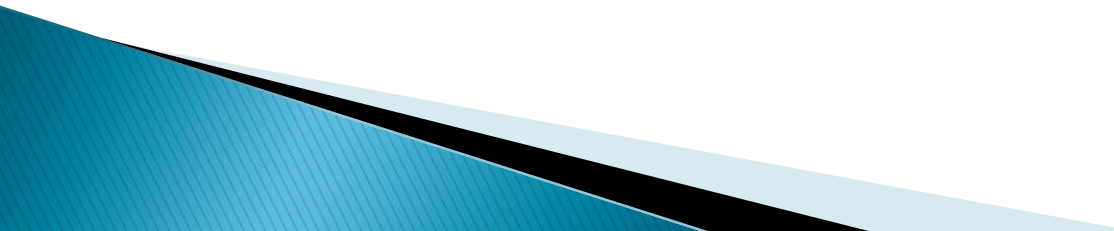
Rene Girard on CBC

- ▶ The CBC Ideas program did an amazing 5-part interview with Girard. Part One is here:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8Y8dVVV4To>
- ▶ The other parts will appear in the column to the right.
- ▶ Part Three deals with Jesus as the innocent scapegoat.


Girard on the Black Death

- ▶ Guillaume de Machaut, *The Judgment of the King of Navarre* (mid-14th century)
 - Jews poison the wells
 - People die by the hundreds
 - Cities destroyed by lightning
 - Others are killed by hailstorm of stones

Guillaume de Machaut, *The Judgment of the King of Navarre*

- ▶ “Then came those false, treacherous and contemptible swine: the shameful Jews, who were wicked and disloyal, who hated the good and loved that which was evil, who gave so much gold and silver and promises to Christians, and who then poisoned several rivers and fountains that had been clear and pure, so that many lost their lives; for those who used them died suddenly. ...Thus every Jew was destroyed, some hanged, others burned; some were drowned, others beheaded with ax or sword.”
- 

Persecution of Jews during the plague

- ▶ 1348–50, massacres in France, Barcelona, Erfut, Basel, Aragon, Flanders, and Freiburg
 - ▶ January 1349 Jews burned alive in Basel (600 perish)
 - ▶ 14 February 1349 900 Jews burned alive in Strasbourg
 - ▶ 510 Jewish communities destroyed
- 

Criticisms of Girard

- ▶ Tends to make grandiose claims
 - Mimetic theory on origin of culture
 - Humans have many motivations beyond mimicry
 - Culture is complex and has many sources
- ▶ Origins of culture argument not verifiable
- ▶ Claims too much for the Bible's uniqueness
 - Sheila Agar's lecture in this series
- ▶ Looks at scapegoating from anthropological, literary, and psychological perspectives -- and not sociology

Scapegoating and the Other

- » Using an ancient concept to
analyze violence today

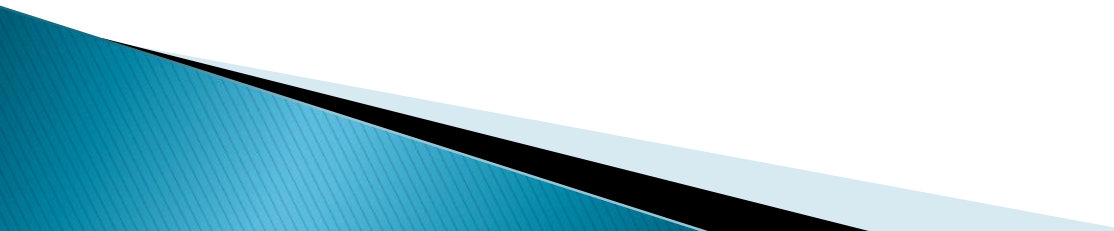
Enrique Dussel: Social Sin and the Eclipse of the “Other”

- ▶ Evil occurs when we define someone as “other”, that is, not fully human.
- ▶ We then feel that it is legitimate to dominate, exploit or even kill them.
- ▶ The dominant culture (including religion) assures us that this is natural, good, and/or necessary.
 - From Enrique Dussel, *Ethics and Community*, 1988

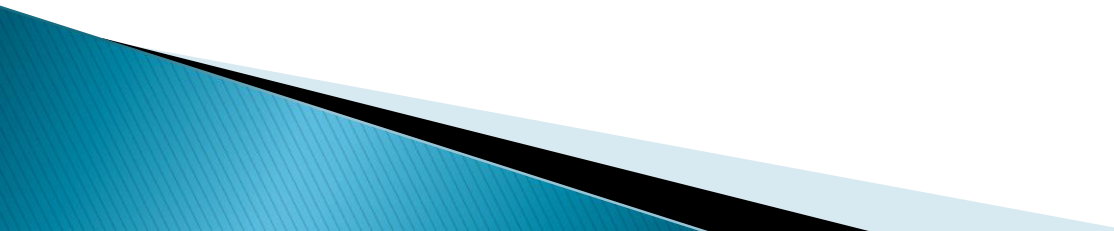
The I–Thou relationship

- ▶ Why did God create us?
 - Community and the individual
 - Love and freedom
- ▶ Martin Buber: the I–Thou relationship
 - *I and Thou* (New York : Scribner, 1923 [1958]: Second edition)
- ▶ Scapegoating: the rejection of the other
 - Blamed for social evil
 - Defined as “other”

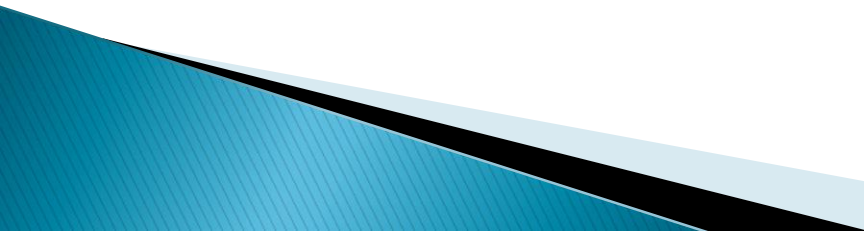
Dussel: Evil and Death

- ▶ Domination
 - ▶ Despoilation (exploitation)
 - ▶ Exclusion
 - ▶ Replacement of I–Thou relationship with I–It relationship
- 

Dussel: Evil and Death

- ▶ The destruction of community: negation of the dignity of the human person of the "other"
 - ▶ The Other becomes disposable, superfluous, or, worse, dangerous
 - ▶ The other is defined only in relation to our needs, fears, desires, goals: "totalization of the self"
 - ▶ Leads to dehumanization of our enemies, which can lead to violence
- 


Dussel: Evil is an order

- ▶ The systemic rejection of the "other": slavery, racism, sexism, exploitation, etc.
 - ▶ Social sin: institutionalization of evil
 - This relationship is reproduced in social forms outside the control of any one individual.
 - They become part of our very social structures and institutions.
 - They appear “natural”, that is, as “common sense”.
- 

The Destruction of European Jews

»» The paradigmatic scapegoating episode

Jews in Nazi Germany

- ▶ Archetypal episode of scapegoat violence for the West
 - ▶ Jews are a minority in a powerful, industrialized, democratic Germany
 - ▶ Are re-imagined as an *existential threat* to Germany
 - ▶ Are isolated, marginalized, and destroyed
- 

The Holocaust or the *Shoah* ("the time of desolation")

1939

- ▶ 16.6 million Jews worldwide
- ▶ 9.5 million (57%) lived in Europe

1945

- ▶ 11 million Jews worldwide
- ▶ 3.8 million (35%) lived in Europe

The Shoah: How Jews Died

- ▶ a) ghettoization;
- ▶ b) *Einsatzgruppen* (death squads);
- ▶ c) death camps
 - Slave labour
 - Extermination facilities

Jewish life in Europe before 1933

- ▶ Mostly concentrated in Eastern Europe, in Jewish towns and villages.
 - ▶ Separated minority. Spoke Yiddish. Dressed differently.
 - ▶ In the West, Jews were more assimilated
 - ▶ In Germany, half a million Jews in a country of 67 million (0.75%)
 - ▶ Integrated into capitalist economy, Weimar democracy, German cultural and social life – especially universities and liberal professions
 - ▶ More widely accepted as citizens—despite growing anti-Semitism
- <http://www.ushmm.org/outreach/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007689>

Dehumanization of the Jews

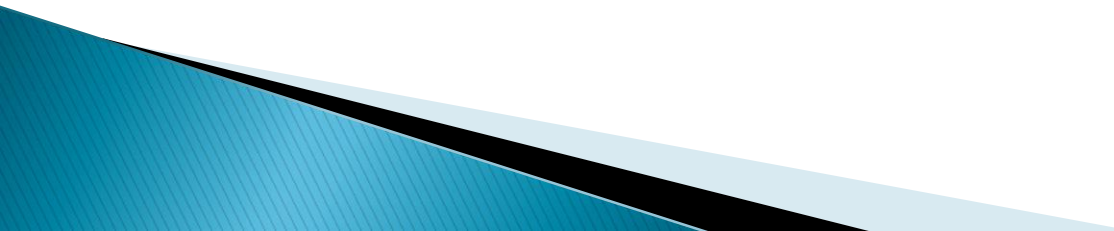


From citizens (us) to
other (them)

Post World War I Germany

- ▶ Blamed for War
 - Loses territory
 - Must pay reparations
 - Economic chaos
- ▶ “Stabbed in the back”
 - Search for causes of defeat
 - Search for traitors
- ▶ Deeply divided society
 - Increasing violence in political rhetoric
 - Paramilitary wings of major political organization


Dehumanization of the Jews: From citizens (us) to other (them).

- ▶ **1933** Hitler appointed Chancellor of Germany (30 January). Nazis take control of the state soon after.
 - ▶ Dachau concentration camp established for communists, socialists, homosexuals and Jews.
 - ▶ Laws are passed prohibiting Jews from working in hospitals, schools, owning land, and participating in cultural life and sports.
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Dehumanization of the Jews

- ▶ 1935 Nuremberg Laws passed (15 September). Jews are excluded from citizenship. Some 300 laws and regulations hem in Jewish life. Ten percent of Jewish population emigrates.

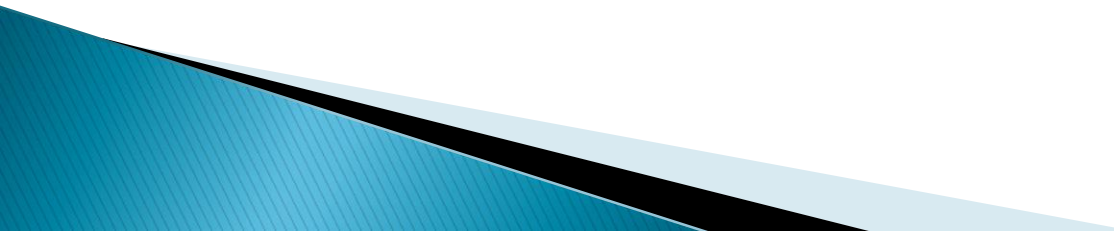
Dehumanization of the Jews

- ▶ **1938** Laws passed to exclude Jews from the economy.
 - ▶ Licenses of Jewish doctors and lawyers revoked.
 - ▶ Jewish males must add "Israel" to their names; females must add "Sarah" to theirs. Jewish children banned from German schools.
 - ▶ *Kristallnacht* (8–9 November) Anti-Jewish riots after Herschl Grynszpan assassinates German official in Paris.
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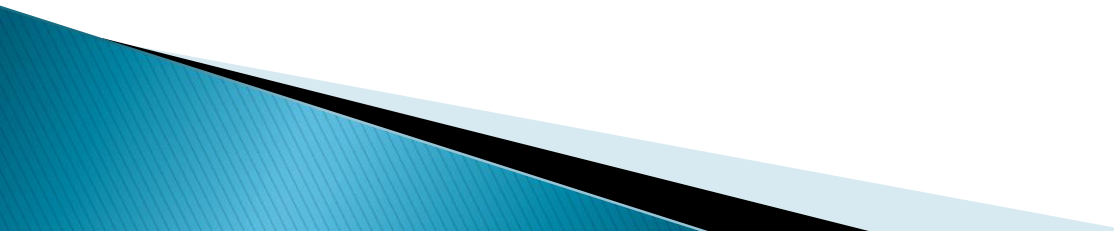
Dehumanization of the Jews

- ▶ **1939** Germany invades Czechoslovakia (14–16 March); Poland (1 September); Britain and France declare war against Germany (3 September). Soviets sign non-aggression pact with Germany.
- ▶ Euthanasia programme begins. Targets are the "handicapped", alcoholics, the mentally ill.

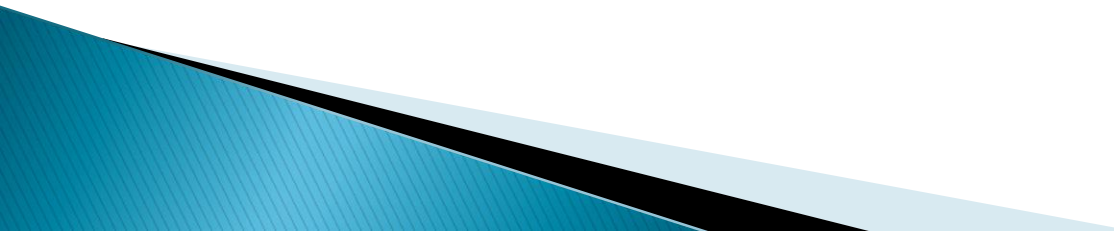
Dehumanization of the Jews

- ▶ **1940** Germany invades Denmark and Norway (9 April); Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg and France (10 May). France falls (22 June).
 - ▶ Creation of sealed ghettos in Lodz and Warsaw.
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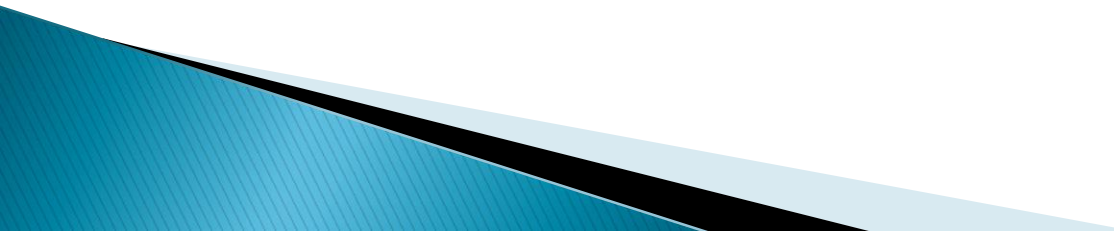
Dehumanization of the Jews

- ▶ 1941 Germany invades Yugoslavia and Greece.
 - ▶ Anti-Jewish pogroms and riots in German occupied territories.
 - ▶ Germany declares war against the United States of America (11 December).
- 

The Destruction of European Jews

- ▶ **1942** Wannsee Conference decision is made to pursue "the final solution" (20 January).
 - ▶ Liquidation of Polish Jews commences (March).
Slovakian Jews deported to Auschwitz (March);
Mass gassings at Auschwitz begin (June);
Dutch, Belgian, Luxembourgian, Norwegian
Jews deported to Auschwitz.
 - ▶ Romani (Gypsies) deported to Auschwitz (16 November).
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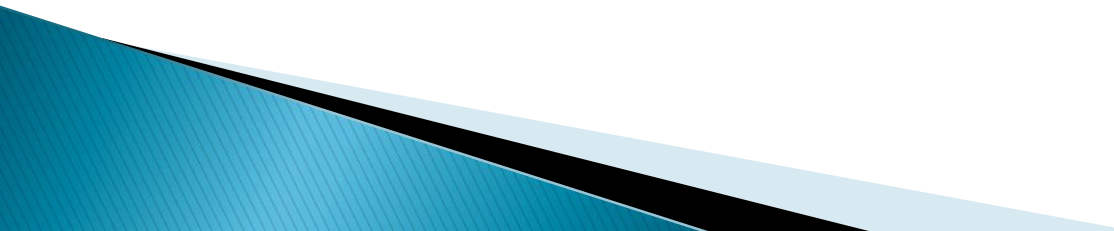
The Destruction of European Jews

- ▶ 1943 Greek Jews deported to Treblinka; Dracow ghetto liquidated. Lithuanian Jews massacred; Italian Jews deported to Auschwitz.
 - ▶ Denmark smuggles 90% of its Jews to safety against Nazi orders (September–October).
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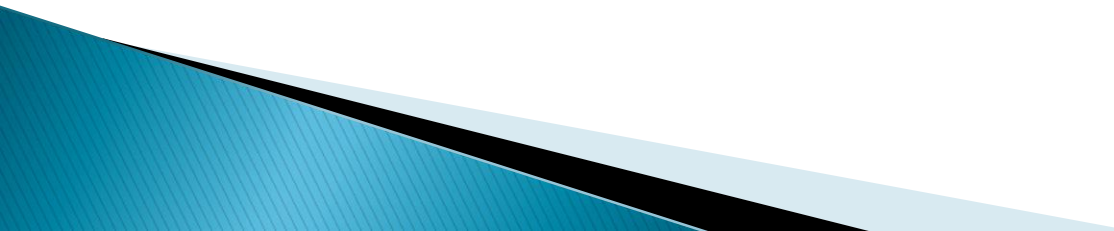
The Destruction of European Jews

- ▶ 1944 Hungarian Jews deported to Auschwitz.
- ▶ D-Day (6 June).

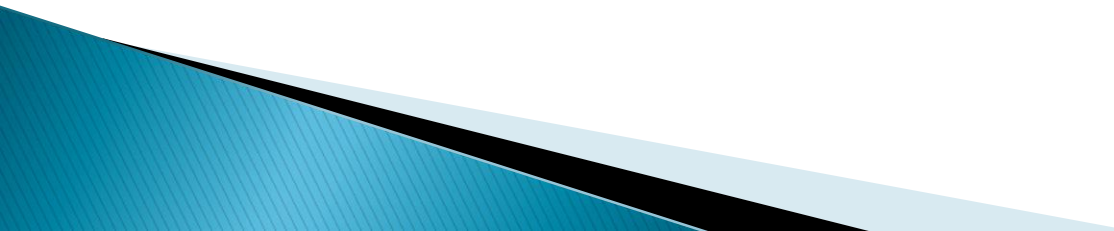
The Destruction of European Jews

- ▶ **1945** Death marches of Jews and non-Jewish slave labourers towards Germany (January).
 - ▶ Auschwitz liberated (27 January); Buchenwald liberated (11 April); Bergen-Belsen liberated (15 April); Dachau liberated (28 April).
 - ▶ Germany surrenders (8 May).
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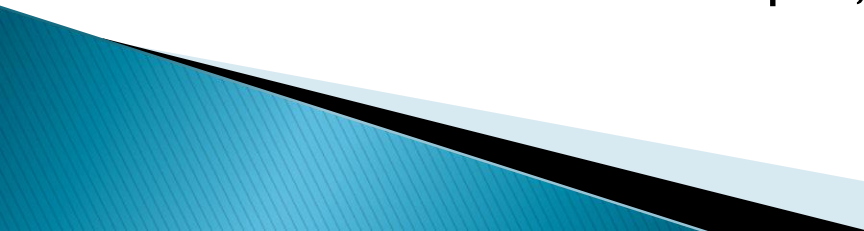
Scapegoating is systemic

- ▶ Pogroms (like Kristallnacht) are sporadic and short-lived
 - ▶ Zigmunt Bauman: killing of Jews would have taken 200 years of a daily Kristallnacht
 - ▶ Systemic scapegoating: role of ideology and technology
- 

Zigmunt Bauman: Holocaust and Modern Society

- ▶ Human made society therefore they can/must change it
 - ▶ Ideology gives us a blueprint for changing society
 - ▶ Modernity is a “garden culture”
- 

Role of ideology: Jews as Other

- Enlightenment and liberation
 - Human rights and equality
 - Jews move into the mainstream
 - Rejection of enlightenment
 - Jews as scapegoat for loss of World War I and economic troubles afterwards
 - Mythological function of “the Jews”
 - Reality vs myth
 - Jews as rich and poor, all-powerful and weak, educated and stupid, masculine and feminine, etc.
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Nazi Ideology

From Stephen T. Katz

- ▶ Nazi ideology:
 - a) eugenics
 - b) racism
 - c) social darwinism
 - d) Manichaeistic philosophy

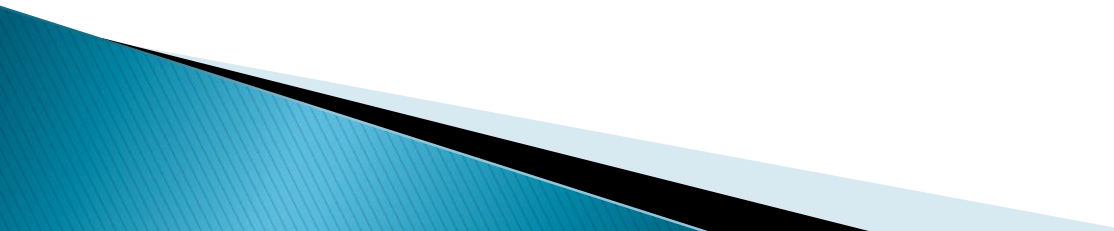
Manichaeistic philosophy (dualism)

Good	Evil
Germans	Jews
Spiritual	Material/Carnal (flesh)
Moral	Immoral (incl. sexual lust)
Generous, capable of sacrifice	Greedy, self-interested
Masculine virtues	Feminine vices
Clean, orderly	Filthy, chaotic
Healthy	Sickly
Modern	Pre-modern
Destined to rule the world	Destined to disappear


Hitler and systemic scapegoating

- ▶ Rejected “antisemitism from purely emotional grounds” (that lead to pogroms)
- ▶ Wanted an “antisemitism of reason,” which aimed at “the planned legislative combating and removal of the Jews’ privileges.”
- ▶ “Its final aim must unshakably be the removal of the Jews altogether.”
 - From Richard J. Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich*, (New York: Penguin, 2004).

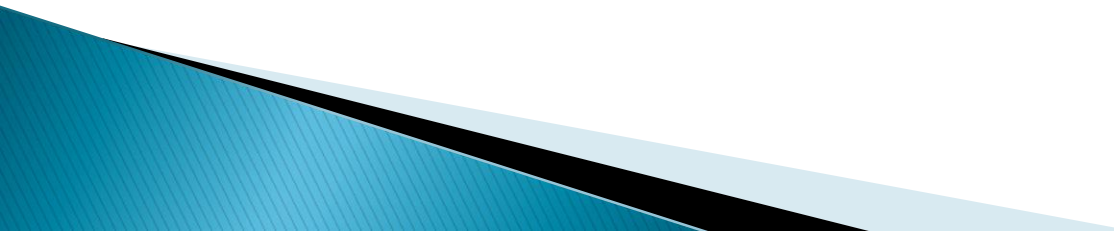
Requires social structures and institutions

- ▶ Nazi project of isolation, oppression, and extermination required enormous bureaucratic and technological infrastructure
 - ▶ State apparatus (bureaucracy)
 - ▶ Propaganda machine
 - ▶ Armed forces
 - ▶ Railways, utilities, businesses, medical profession, etc.
- 

Systemic scapegoating

- ▶ Religious intolerance
 - ▶ Sexism
 - ▶ Racism
 - ▶ Ethnic chauvinism
 - ▶ Homophobia
 - ▶ Immigrants / the poor / unions / Planned Parenthood
 - ▶ This is why scapegoating is “unconscious”: the powerful effect of ideology and participation in social structures.
- 

Modern society makes scapegoating far more dangerous

- ▶ Governments have more power: new technological and bureaucratic innovations give military more control over society
 - ▶ Powerful institutions (political, economic, social) have greater infiltration into the life-world
 - ▶ Modern mass communication makes propaganda more effective.
- 

Scapegoating A Theory of Violence

Third Age Learning Kitchener–Waterloo
RIM Park, Waterloo, Winter, 2015

Scapegoating and Violence

- ▶ **January 19 – Scapegoating Women in Myth and History.**
 - Sheila Ager, Professor, Classical Studies, University of Waterloo
- ▶ **January 26 – The Hero as Scapegoat: Christ and his Predecessors**
 - Sheila Ager, Professor, Classical Studies, University of Waterloo
- ▶ **February 2 – Blaming the Victims: Turkey and the Armenian Genocide**
 - Gavin Brockett, Associate Professor, Middle East and Turkey, Wilfrid Laurier University

- ▶ **February 9 – The Holocaust: Scapegoating Jews and other ‘Undesirables’**
 - Gary Bruce, Professor and Chair of the Department of History, University of Waterloo

 - ▶ **February 16 – The Devil Made Her Do It**
 - Greta Kroeker, Associate Professor, Department of History, University of Waterloo

 - ▶ **February 23 – Islamophobic Scapegoating in Europe and North America**
 - Timothy Gianotti, Associate Professor, Studies in Islam, Renison University College

 - ▶ **March 1 – We’re not Racist – We’re Canadian!**
 - Wendy Fletcher, Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Renison University College
- 

Thank you!

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