1 "Philosemitic Europe"
A Contradiction in Terms?

In German-ruled Europe, observed the Holocaust historian Saul Friedländer, "anti-Jewish policies could unfold to their most extreme levels without the interference of any major countervailing interests." In every country, to be sure, individual efforts or clandestine networks attempted to save Jews marked for murder. While in the East, rescue only marginally reduced the colossal tally of Jewish victims, in Western Europe, non-Jewish helpers mitigated the lethality of the Final Solution. Public silence about the fate of the Jews, however, remained a distinctive feature of the "years of extermination." One of the first scholars to criticize the passivity of the Vatican, Friedländer extended this judgment to all wartime institutions: "not one social group, not one religious community, not one scholarly (…) or professional association in Germany and throughout Europe declared its solidarity with the Jews." The Amsterdam workers' strike of February 25, 1941, offered a rare example of public protest against anti-Jewish brutality. But during ghettoization or the "Holocaust by bullets" in the East, and when deportations to death camps started across Europe, "only very rare gestures of solidarity with the victims occurred on a collective scale."[1] From London, governments-in-exile condemned persecution, promised the return of equal status after the war, and threatened collaborators with retribution. Yet fearful to be seen as defending Jewish interests, they seldom instructed populations to hide or assist endangered Jews.[2] In addition to the numerous accomplices it found east and west of the continent, Nazi Germany could also count on Europe's "moral indifference" to carry out its program of annihilation.[3]

[1] Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939–1945: The Years of Extermination* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2008), xxi, 426.

[2] The London Poles issued such an order in May 1943 when large amounts of Polish Jews had already been killed. See Antony Polonsky, "Introduction" in Jan Láníček and James Jordan (eds.), *Governments-in-Exile and the Jews during the Second World War* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2013), 1–32.

[3] On "moral indifference," see Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), 18–23.

This deficit of solidarity is this book's point of departure: the baseline against which shifts in the history of Europe and the Jews since the Holocaust must be gauged. Focused on the Western side of the Iron Curtain from 1945 to 1989, and on the European Union since its inception, this study documents the valorization of Jews from the collapse of the Third Reich to the present. Although tabooed in the public domain after the defeat of Nazism, antisemitism immediately resurfaced in the form of latent or "secondary" expressions. But a reversal occurred in mainstream politics and culture. Animus against Jews lost its public permissiveness while qualified tolerance required a thicker veneer of sympathy. On the other end of the spectrum, discourses of defense or esteem migrated from the periphery to the center of public conversation. Judeophobic stereotypes, or the idea of irreducible Jewish otherness, easily found their way into pro-Jewish expression. Yet ranging from mere rejection of prejudice to special deference, new languages of solidarity offered an unprecedented counterpoint to antisemitism. This evolution picked up pace at the end of the Cold War. Half a century after the Holocaust, Hitler's Jewish enemy morphed into archetypal friend in the official rhetoric of European Union leaders. In the words of the historian Enzo Traverso, the memory of the Jewish genocide "made the former pariah people a protected minority."[4]

The postwar period, from this point of view, is nothing short of revolutionary in the history of Europe's "Jewish question" since the Enlightenment. A lucid critic of the emancipation era, Hannah Arendt wrote in the late 1930s that "in a society on the whole hostile to the Jews – and that situation obtained in all [European] countries in which Jews lived, down to the twentieth century – it is possible to assimilate only by assimilating into anti-Semitism also."[5] Equal rights and incorporation, she intimated, required surrender to normative hostility. But if prewar Europe, despite key East/West differences, can plausibly be labelled "against the Jews," European democracies after 1945 made the befriending of Jews a key marker of post-fascism.[6] After 150 years of ambivalent emancipation, it took a genocide to create more hospitable conditions; and readers of this book will discover how valorization also exacted a price on Jews, Muslims, and Palestinians. When applied to the recent past, however, Arendt's penetrating phrase warrants

[4] Enzo Traverso, *The End of Jewish Modernity* (London: Pluto Press, 2016), 3.
[5] Hannah Arendt, *Rahel Varnhagen: The Life of a Jewish Woman* (New York: NYRB Classics, 2022), 224.
[6] Götz Aly, *Europe against the Jews: 1880–1945* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2020).

crucial modifications. In societies committed to tolerance, Jews have gained acceptance without obligatory assimilation into antisemitism. For their good fortune but not without costs, post-Holocaust Europe has extended them a puzzling invitation: to assimilate "into philosemitism also."

Before Guilt: "Love for the Jews" from the Late Nineteenth Century to 1945

The German publicist Wilhelm Marr popularized the word "antisemitism" in 1879, but opponents of "Semites" in Imperial Germany simultaneously invented "philosemitism" to disparage alleged Jew-lovers.[7] The German Liberals first castigated as "philosemites," however, refuted the charge of love. They claimed instead to only reject antisemitism in the name of democratic ideals. Few "valued the Jew for what he had to give, rather than for what he had to give up," the German-Jewish scholar Gershom Scholem pointed out in a notorious essay; most pinned their hopes on conversion and intermarriage to put an end to anti-Jewish hostility.[8] Yet a small network of Protestant and Liberal self-declared "philosemites" attempted to defend Jews, Judaism, or Jewish learning in Imperial and Weimar Germany.[9] Already critical in her wartime writings of a relationship based on non-Jewish "benefactors" and Jewish "protégés," Hannah Arendt pounced on these supposed friends in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951). Such "philosemites," she wrote, showed their true face after Hitler's seizure of power when "they felt as though they had to purge themselves of secret viciousness."[10] The French Jewish journalist Bernard Lazare, Arendt's favorite "conscious pariah," had already cautioned against defenders of Jews during the Dreyfus Affair. "Philosemites," Lazare noted in 1901, "go at length to establish that the

[7] Wolfram Kinzig, "Philosemitismus- was ist das? Eine kritische Begriffanalyse" in Irene A. Diekmann and Elke-Vera Kotowski (eds.), *Geliebter Feind, Gehasster Freund: Antisemitismus und Philosemitismus in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Berlin: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg, 2009), 25–60; Marc Grimm, "Die Begriffsgeschichte des Philosemitismus," *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 22 (2013): 244–266.

[8] Gershom Scholem, "Jews and Germans" (1966) in *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis. Selected Essays* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), 71–92.

[9] Michael Brenner, "'Gott schütze uns vor unseren Freunden' – Zur Ambivalenz des Philosemitismus im Kaiserreich," *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 2 (1993): 174–199; Alan T. Levenson, *Between Philosemitism and Antisemitism: Defense of Jews and Judaism in Germany 1871–1932* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2004).

[10] Hannah Arendt, "Pro Paul Tillich" (1942) in Jerome Kohn and Ron Feldman (eds.), *The Jewish Writings: Hannah Arendt* (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), 167–169; *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1979), 86.

Jew is perfectly similar to the people surrounding him, only to remark on his certain inferiority."[11]

Few advocates of Jews, however, called themselves "philosemites" after the term came into being in the 1880s. In England, "philo-Semitism" entered the *Oxford Literary Dictionary* in 1914. Yet the conservative and Liberal politicians who extolled the Jewish people in the early twentieth century did not need the word to engage in apologetics. Jews formed "the most formidable and the most remarkable race which has ever appeared in the world," wrote Winston Churchill in 1920 – before excluding from his praise "diabolical" Jewish revolutionaries.[12] Churchill had his good and bad Jews, yet he heralded those deserving of his admiration as exceptional contributors to Western civilization. During World War I, English Judeophilia fatefully conflated with pro-Zionism. While British support for "a national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine partly stemmed from imperial calculations, the Balfour Declaration's demotion of indigenous Arabs into "existing non-Jewish communities" also bore the mark of Protestant restorationism. "As you must remember, we had been trained even more in Hebrew history than in the history of our own country," explained David Lloyd George in 1925 to justify the "natural sympathy" for the Zionist cause shared by imperial elites of his generation.[13]

British philo-Zionism nevertheless included hostile views of Jews. As prime minister, Balfour had passed the 1905 Aliens Act restricting Jewish immigration from the Russian Empire. In 1919, he wrote that the settlement of Jews in Palestine would "mitigate the age-long miseries created for Western civilization by the presence in its midst of a Body which it too long regarded as alien and even hostile."[14] The language of racial kinship, however, reversely conveyed appreciation. In his testimony to the Palestine Royal Commission (1936–37), Churchill included Jews into the "higher-grade" race that in the past offered "Red Indians in America" and "Black people in Australia" the benefits of modernity. Jewish fellow civilizers, he intimated, now pursued this noble

[11] Cited in Antoine Compagnon, "Antisémitisme ou antimodernisme"? Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, Bernard Lazare, Léon Bloy" in Ilana Y. Zinguer and Sam W. Bloom (eds.), *L'antisémitisme éclairé. Inclusion and Exclusion: Perspectives on Jews from the Enlightenment to the Dreyfus Affair* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 423–447.

[12] Winston S. Churchill, "Zionism versus Bolshevism: A Struggle for the Soul of the Jewish People" (1920), cited in Martin Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews: A Lifelong Friendship* (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 2007), 43.

[13] Lloyd George cited in Eitan Bar Yosef, "Christian Zionism and Victorian Culture," *Israel Studies* 8, no. 2 (Summer 2003): 18–44.

[14] Cited in Mitchell J. Cohen, *Britain's Moment in Palestine. Retrospect and Perspectives, 1917–1948* (London: Routledge, 2014), 12.

goal in Palestine.[15] The British statesman's words were expunged from the record, but the Royal Commission's report distinguished between "resourceful, Western-minded" Jews from "predominantly Asiatic" Arabs. The Labour politician Herbert Morrison, for his part, claimed in 1939 that Jews in Palestine "have proved to be first-class colonizers, to have the real, good, old, Empire building qualities": Interwar British philo-Zionists wavered between the negative racialization of Jews – whether poor Eastern European immigrants or "rich plutocratic" financiers – and the positive racialization of the Zionist project.[16] Contrary to what the Anglo-Jewish historian Cecil Roth argued in 1949, and since then accounts of "admiration and support" for Jews from Cromwell to Churchill, philosemitism in Britain never amounted to a cohesive "movement."[17] More favorable to mythicized Semites or Hebrews than to Judaism or modern Jews, or better disposed toward "first-class colonizers" in Palestine than urban Jews in Europe, this peculiar current of English religious and political thought was above all a subset of Christian, Victorian, and imperialist worldviews.[18] Even pronounced admiration for Jews among educated elites did not turn Judeophilia into a fixed ideology. From its lexical birth to World War II, philosemitism carried instead a wide range of meanings in European politics – in Britain as on the continent.

The word's original antisemitic connotation was not lost on Nazi ideologues. Joseph Goebbels first hijacked the term in 1928. Over eight issues of Der Philosemit, a satirical supplement to his weekly newspaper *Der Angriff*, Hitler's henchman posed as a friend of Jews only to

[15] Cited in Michael Makovsky, *Churchill's Promised Land: Zionism and Statecraft* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 156.

[16] Herbert Morrison (House of Commons, 1938) cited in Paul Kelemen, *The British Left and Zionism: History of a Divorce* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), 27; James Renton, "The End of the Semites" in James Renton and Ben Gidley (eds.), *Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Europe: A Shared History?* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 99–140; Yair Wallach, "The Racial Logic of Palestine's Partition," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 46, no. 8 (2023): 1576–1598.

[17] Cecil Roth, "Philo-Semitism in England" (1949) in *Essays and Portraits in Anglo-Jewish History* (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Society Publication of America, 1962), 10–21. See also William D. Rubinstein and Hilary L. Rubinstein, *Philosemitism: Admiration and Support in the English-Speaking World for Jews, 1840–1939* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999); Gertrude Himmelfarb, *Philosemitism in England from Cromwell to Churchill* (New York: Encounter Books, 2011).

[18] On British imperialism and philosemitism, see among others Abigail Green, "The British Empire and the Jews: An Imperialism of Human Rights?" *Past & Present* 199, no. 1 (May 2008): 175–205; Eric Michael Reisenauer, "Anti-Jewish Philosemitism: British and Hebrew Affinity in Ninetieth Century British Antisemitism," *British Scholar* I, no. 1 (September 2008): 79–104; David Feldman, "Jews and the British Empire, c. 1900," *History Workshop Journal* 63, no. 1 (2007): 70–79.

engage in rabid antisemitism.[19] He then devoted his attention to crypto-philosemitism among Nazi elites. In February 1935, Goebbels went so far as to accuse the editor of *Der Stürmer* Julius Streicher of "tendencies towards philosemitism."[20] His attacks on imaginary Jew-lovers intensified during the war. In September 1942, Goebbels lashed out at German "economic and industrial experts" guilty in his mind of "philosemitic intellectual propaganda." By "philosemitism," the chief propagandist meant their recommendation to keep temporarily alive, as slave laborers, 30,000 Jews in Berlin. Such weak resolve, he complained, harmed the struggle against Judeo-Bolshevism.[21] A few months later, Goebbels seethed against the "philosemitic world" pushed to war against the Reich under the sway of international Jewry: a recurrent theme in his speeches until his death by suicide in May 1945.

In Europe, however, the philosemitism against which Nazism rebelled only amounted to a variety of political forces merely opposed to antisemitism. Liberalism, reformist or revolutionary socialism, like interwar antifascism, did not count many demonstrative philosemites in their ranks. Yet even if they did not profess "love" or even friendship, political programs committed to civic equality offered Jews a safety zone of membership and rights. Such inclusion, opined Stefan Zweig, was satisfactory enough. "Everything that is not destructive, uprooting, thoughtless," the Austrian-Jewish writer noted in 1931, deserved the label "philosemitic."[22] What has been later called "anti-antisemitism," of course, did not require rejection of prejudice or a desire to defend Jews as Jews. Political challengers of antisemitism in the interwar era did not see the phenomenon as a central ill of Western modernity, but as a by-product of reactionary conservatism, fascism, or monopoly capitalism. Between 1919 and 1939, however, the European left formed the main line of defense against antisemitism. The victory of "progress" over fascism remained its primary objective. But this prospect also crucially entailed the acceptance of Jews into the ranks of undifferentiated humanity.

Philosemitism meant more than anti-antisemitism for the unofficial network of Catholic churchmen and intellectuals who in the late 1930s

[19] Helmut Heiber, *Goebbels* (London: Robert Hale & Company, 1972), 55–56; Christian T. Barth, *Goebbels und die Juden* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2003), 62.

[20] *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels* (Munich: K.G. Saur, 2005), Part I (1923–1941), February 16, 1935.

[21] Ibid., Part II (1941–1945), September 30, 1942, and December 15, 1942.

[22] Cited in Alan T. Levenson, "From Recognition to Consensus: The Nature of Philosemitism in Germany, 1871–1932" in Jonathan Karp and Adam Suttcliffe (eds.), *Philosemitism in History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 190–210.

took a stance against the Nazi racial state.[23] Emblematic of this current, the French philosopher Jacques Maritain exhorted Christians to show "a lot of love" to Jews to avert imminent catastrophe. "There are in the Europe of today," Maritain presciently stated in February 1938, "those who want extermination and death, and first and foremost the extermination of the Jews – because after all that is really what it comes down to, does it not?" Against the "idiotic apparatus of scientific racism," European Catholicism's foremost thinker countered that "Jews are in no way a biological race," but "a community of mental and moral structures, of ancestral experiences." Maritain nonetheless reintroduced "race" in a positive sense when he warned against "the general massacre of the race of Moses and Jesus." His ominous prediction foreshadowed a Christian philosemitism predicated on imitative alignment with Jewish victimhood. "Never before in the history of the world were the Jews persecuted so universally," explained Maritain, "and never has persecution attacked, as today, both Jews and Christians." The Holocaust as "Passion of Israel," and therefore foundational Judeo-Christian event, is a theme to which Maritain later returned during his wartime exile in the United States.[24]

The Vatican, too, gestured toward Judeo-Christian kinship. "Spiritually, we are all Semites," declared Pius XI in September 1938, after reminding the faithful that "antisemitism is inadmissible." The Holy See's affinities with "Semites," however, did not translate into overt solidarity with persecuted Jews. Issued in March 1937, the encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* [*With Burning Anxiety*] denounced the "aggressive paganism" of Hitler's regime without any mention of the dire situation of German Jews. Pius XI's "hidden encyclical," written in 1938 but never made public, deplored "the flagrant denial of the elementary rights of Jews." The document nonetheless cautioned against excessive empathy "as long as the unbelief of the Jews and their hostility toward Christianity persist." A month after Hitler's invasion of Poland, Pius XII's Summi Pontificatus once again affirmed the incompatibility of racism with the Catholic faith without a word on antisemitism. At the onset of the German assault on European Jewry, anti-Judaism forced the Church into condescending pity: compassion for an "unfortunate

[23] On Catholic anti-racist thought in the 1930s, see John Connelly, *From Enemy to Brother: The Revolution in Catholic Teachings on the Jews 1933–1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 94–146.

[24] Richard Francis Crane, "Jacques Maritain, the Mystery of Israel, and the Holocaust," *The Catholic Historical Review* 95, no. 1 (January 2009): 25–56; Vittorio Possenti, "Maritain and the Jewish Question" in Robert Royal (ed.), *Jacques Maritain and the Jews* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 104–122.

people condemned to wander the face of the earth forever" mixed with enduring distaste for the obstinate Synagogue.[25] Christian rescuers or sympathizers of Jews in German-occupied Europe took more risks but did not always deviate from this view. For Catholic spiritual resisters in France, antisemitism violated Christian teachings but opposition to Vichy's racial laws did not require special esteem for Jews or Judaism. "It is not necessary to be a philosemite," stated the underground publication Témoignage Chrétien in the spring of 1942, "to condemn without hesitation all forms of antisemitism."[26]

The imminent defeat of Nazi Germany did not popularize the word "philosemitism" in soon liberated Western Europe. In February 1945, the famed French writer André Malraux confided to his fellow resistance comrade Roger Stéphane that "if there is a Jewish question, neutrality is inconceivable. I am a philosemite, let it be known." This remark struck its Jewish recipient as worthy of note yet remained private.[27] As the historian Cecil Roth observed in 1949, "the psychological and political attitude to which I would like to call attention [i.e., philosemitism] has not yet entered the European vocabulary."[28] The word, however, already circulated among surviving German Jews who gave it a distinctive negative meaning: a friendly disposition detrimental to Jews. "Many Germans," Hannah Arendt wrote in 1942, "believe they have done enough if they declare themselves philosemites (…) but that does not prevent such attitudes from being at best politically meaningless, and usually harmful."[29] The exiled thinker, unaware that decades later streets in all major German cities would bear her name, introduced then a critique destined to a long future in the Federal Republic. In a speech delivered during the 1956 "Week of Brotherhood," the novelist and moral figure Heinrich Böll warned against "a pro-Semitism that is as scary to me as antisemitism."[30]

[25] Michael R. Marrus, "The Vatican on Racism and Antisemitism, 1938–1939: A New Look at a Might-Have-Been," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 7, no. 3 (Winter 1997): 378–395.

[26] See "Antisémites" (April–May 1942) in François and Renée Bédarida, *La résistance spirituelle. Cahiers et courriers clandestins du Témoignage Chrétien* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2001), 154.

[27] Roger Stéphane, *André Malraux: Entretiens et précisions* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), 114. On Malraux's philosemitism, see Michaël de Saint-Cheron, *Malraux et les Juifs: Histoire d'une fidélité* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2008).

[28] Roth, *Philo-Semitism in England*, op. cit., 10.

[29] Arendt, "A Way toward the Reconciliation of Peoples" (1942) in *The Jewish Writings*, op. cit., 258–263.

[30] Cited in Stephan Braese, "Verlagerungen: Zur Ökonomie des Philosemitismus in der westdeutschen Nachkriegsliteratur" in Philipp Theisohn and Georg Braungart (eds.), *Philosemitismus: Rhetorik, Poetik, Diskursgeschichte* (Leiden: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2017), 345–356.

But from the Adenauer era to the twenty-first century, German-Jewish writers led the charge. Hyperbolic Judenfreundlichkeit (friendliness toward Jews), they claimed, amounted to repressed Judenhass (Jew-hatred), flawed reckoning with Nazi crimes, recreation of Jewish stereotypes, and not least, insufferable theatrics.

Philosemitism in the Age of Guilt: The German Template

In the wake of the so-called Swastika Epidemic, a two-month episode of antisemitic vandalism in 1959–60, the Central Council of Jews in Germany lamented the "intrusive, ostentatious conciliatoriness" of West German citizens eager to sympathize with the few Jews still living in the country. "Genuine humanitarianism" was welcome, declared Jewish representatives, but "fashionable philosemitism" only sought "the applause of simple souls." The anti-Nazi émigré of Jewish origin Norbert Muhlen, however, challenged the reluctance of the Jewish communal leadership to accept non-Jewish solicitude. "Breast-beating do-gooders," Muhlen countered during a visit of his homeland in 1961, only represented a fraction of the country's "moral elite." On the whole, he wrote, the "Jewish trend" (jüdische Konjonktur) "has remained basically healthy." In his mind, a book market "saturated with works on Jewish subjects," the dissemination of a "new, positive image of Judaism," the popularity of Lessing's Nathan the Wise or widespread interest in Anne Frank's diary within the young generation, only demonstrated progress. For the educated classes, Muhlen conceded, Jews "held some of the attraction that (…) the 'noble savage' held for them in previous epochs": Yet among cultural or religious elites, good will toward Jews was palpable in the Bonn Republic.[31]

Jewish intellectuals who unlike Muhlen still resided in West Germany did not share this view. Without using the word philosemitism, Theodor Adorno condemned in 1962 "the mechanical replacement of negative prejudice into a positive one." The philosopher Ernst Bloch was more explicit. "A patronizing way of making amends," he wrote in 1963, "philosemitism implies something like a certain element of antisemitism, that while vanquished, remains immanent." Adorno and Bloch set into motion a long history of German-Jewish distrust. In 1965, the political scientist Eleonore Sterling reflected on penitent West Germans who lavished praise on Jews as symbols of high culture or pitied them as

[31] Norbert Muhlen, *The Survivors: A Report on the Jews in Germany Today* (New York: Thomas Y. Cowell, 1962), 150–172.

"Auschwitz Jews." Like antisemitism, Sterling remarked, philosemitism reflected a "mental incapacity to truly respect the 'other'." In 1978, the Viennese-born writer Manès Sperber rejected a solicitude that "humiliates me as would a compliment based upon an absurd misunderstanding (…) I do not ask, I decidedly do not wish, that we be loved in this fashion." Jewish intellectuals in the Federal Republic still found philosemitism repulsive during the last decade of the Cold War. An expression of "German guilt complexes," it imposed on them "a status of being special" and prevented the possibility "to feel free as equals among equals." When after reunification the Holocaust occupied a larger place in Germany's national memory, the publicist Henryk Broder noted that "no matter whether Jews are first to be murdered or afterwards to be memorialized, the objective is followed with persistence, tenacity, and a sense of the gigantic." In 1996, a Jewish weekly offered satirical advice to well-intentioned Germans on how to interact with Jews. Avoid the phrase "Of all people, you as Jew must understand…," the newspaper instructed, before imploring philosemites to stop involving Jews in their personal struggle with guilt. Young German-Jewish writers in the twenty-first century, in turn, resented "the political correctness of philosemitism" masking unresolved nervousness about Jews; or refused the role of model minority assigned to them by the atoning Federal Republic. "I am a German Jew, and I would love to be normal," pleaded a director and playwright in 2020.[32]

This polemical tradition, however, has been less concerned with a central feature of West German philosemitism since the 1952 Reparations Agreement: the recurrently tense yet special relationship binding "the land of perpetrators" to the state of Israel. An alternative definition of

[32] Theodor W. Adorno, *Zur Bekämpfung der Antisemitismus heute?* (1962) (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2024); Ernst Bloch, "The So-Called Jewish Question" (1963) in *Literary Essays* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 488–491; Eleonore Sterling, "Judenfreunde – Judenfeinde. Fragwürdiger Philosemitismus in der Bundesrepublik," *Die Zeit*, December 10, 1965, available at: www.zeit.de/1965/50/judenfreunde-judenfeinde; Manès Sperber, untitled essay (1978), in Hans Jürgen Schultz (ed.), *Mein Judentum* (Stuttgart: Kreuz Verlag, 1978), 180–194; Jack Zipes, "The Vicissitudes of Being Jewish in West Germany" in Anson Rabinbach and Jack Zipes (eds.), *Germans and Jews since the Holocaust* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1986), 27–49; Henryk M. Broder in *Der Spiegel*, April 17, 1995, cited in Robert S. Wistrich, *Demonizing the Other: Antisemitism, Racism and Xenophobia* (London: Routledge, 1999), 362; Wolfgang Benz, "Jewish Existence in Germany from the Perspective of the Non-Jewish Majority: Daily Life between Anti-Semitism and Philo-Semitism" in Leslie Morris and Jack Zipes (eds.), *Unlikely History: The Changing German-Jewish Symbiosis, 1945–2000* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 101–118; Yascha Mounk, *Stranger in My Own Country: A Jewish Family in Modern Germany* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014); Max Czollek, *Desintigriert euch!* (Munich: BtB Verlag, 2018); Tobias Ginsburg, "I am a German Jew, and I Would Like to Be Normal," *Haaretz*, May 19, 2020.

philosemitism as guilt-ridden pro-Zionism complicit in the oppression of Palestinians emerged instead from the ranks of the New Left after the 1967 Six-Day War. The Federal Republic's reflexive pro-Israel stance, argued its first challengers, enabled "the German" to devolve to "the Arab" the role of "perpetrator and eternal persecutor of Jews" while absolving the newly democratic nation from sins.[33] The "German catechism" of the twenty-first century, added a recent commentator, not only asserts the uniqueness of the Holocaust at the expense of colonial genocides but also prescribes blind loyalty to Israel and censorship of pro-Palestinian voices: a "redemptive philosemitism" seeking to erase the redemptive antisemitism of the Nazi era.[34]

Jewish left-wing intellectuals, however, have since the days of the Jüdische Gruppe created in Frankfurt in 1980 spoken out against Israeli policies.[35] But until Jewish dissident voices emerged in the early twenty-first century – including that of Israeli transplants in Berlin – the German-Jewish "anti-philosemitic" position traditionally approved of the Federal Republic's special ties to the Jewish state. The "negative symbiosis" between surviving Jews and postwar Germany – participation in the republic but estrangement from the heimat – was always countervailed, for most, by positive identification with Israel. Post-Holocaust German Jews primarily pushed back against a pro-Jewish fascination masquerading as genuine confrontation with the Nazi past. "If someone only likes me because I am Jewish," observed the writer Rafael Seligmann in 2016, "then I know that something makes them do it." The root cause of German philosemitism, he summarized, "is the desperate search for absolution."[36]

Similar suspicion is traceable in the historical scholarship dedicated to philosemitism in the Federal Republic. Focused on the period of Allied occupation (1945–49) and the Adenauer chancellorship (1949–63), Frank Stern's pioneering study portrayed the "metamorphosis of attitudes towards Jews" after the Holocaust as an attempt to "whitewash

[33] Friedemann Buttner, "German Perceptions of the Middle East Conflict: Images and Identifications during the 1967 War," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 6, no. 2 (Winter 1977): 66–81.

[34] A. Dirk Moses, "The German Catechism," *Geschichte der Gegenwart* (May 23, 2021), available at: https://geschichtedergegenwart.ch/the-german-catechism/.

[35] Anna Corsten, "Jewish Left-Wing Intellectuals in Postwar Germany: The Case of Micha Brumlik and the Israeli Palestinian Conflict between Antisemitism and Antizionism" in Alessandra Tarquini (ed.), *The European Left and the Jewish Question 1848–1992* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan 2021), 263–282.

[36] Rafael Seligman in *Deutchlandfunk Kultur* (August 8, 2016), available at: www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/philosemitismus-einer-zweifelhaften-zuneigung-auf-der-spur-100.html.

the yellow badge." Philosemitic discourse in the early postwar period, the historian showed, relied on stereotypes and distortions. A surrogate for real confrontation with criminality, what passed as friendship traded polite declarations and reparations for a clean historical sheet. Banned as racial pollution under Nazism, Judenfreundlichkeit allowed the Bonn Republic to pass the test of democracy. Compulsory exercises in philosemitism, generalized Stern, are "German therapy for German pain. The Jew became the enemy who now had to be loved."[37] In the German "theater of memory," added the sociologist Y. Michal Bodemann, German Jews during the Cold War, and new arrivals from the former Soviet Union afterwards, have only been "loved" as "bodily presence" guaranteeing the redemption of perpetrators from sin. This approach, no doubt, illuminates the peculiar psychology of German denial and atonement since the 1950s. Yet it systematically reduces philosemitism to a mere stratagem: the tactic of people who have something to hide or to confess.

While this definition has the merit of clarity, it also negates the possibility of pro-Jewish interventions not directly driven by perpetrator guilt. As this book shows, numerous sympathizers of Jews and/or Zionism in the 1950s and 1960s had a "good war" in resistance movements or in victorious Britain. If guilt motivated them, it was only guilt by association. Other factors where at play, including legacies of "colonial humanism" in positive perceptions of the young state of Israel and the first Israeli Jews. Likewise, performances of philosemitism in contemporary Europe extend beyond obligatory atonement or ritualistic contrition. In post-Communist Poland, non-Jewish civic activists have attempted to resurrect the Jewish past to defend liberal pluralism against Catholic nationalism and authoritarian populism – "a redefinition of Polishness through Jewishness."[38] In reunified Germany, the Holocaust "remembrance culture" of the last thirty years has remained tethered to expiation. Its manifestations, however, transcend the rote recitation of Holocaust "catechism" to include a "routine accomplishment of civility" based on positive sentiments toward Jews, Judaism, and Israel.[39] Not just a diktat

[37] Frank Stern, *Whitewashing of the Yellow Badge: Antisemitism and Philosemitism in Postwar Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); "The Revival of Antisemitism in United Germany: Historical Aspects and Methodological Considerations" in Michael Brown (ed.), *Approaches to Antisemitism: Context and Curriculum* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1994), 78–94.

[38] Geneviève Zubrzycki, *Resurrecting the Jew: Nationalism, Philosemitism, and Poland's Jewish Revival* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2022).

[39] Irit Dekel, "Philosemitism in Contemporary German Media," *Media, Culture & Society* 44, no. 4 (2020): 746–763.

from the high levels of state, German philosemitism is also anchored in civil society: an invitation to explore its deeper meanings instead of merely expose a maneuver of guilt deflection.

Heritage philosemitism in post-1989 East-Central Europe, to be sure, has created virtual Jewish spaces in which the absence of Jews matters more than their negligeable presence. Although Jewish revivalism by non-Jews in the former Communist bloc also entails critical engagement with the past, it is not immune from fetishization or cultural appropriation. Philosemitism has generated its own nefarious consequences in contemporary Germany. After reunification, many Jews in the Federal Republic still felt like exotic beings not "subject to the ups and downs of mortal men and women." Others still lament today the inability of Germans to understand that Jewish life can exist outside of their narrow field of vision – either Holocaust or Israel.[40] Since the early 2000s, accusations of "imported" antisemitism in Germany have been leveled at Muslims despite police reports showing in 2021 that only 1 percent of perpetrators of antisemitic acts can be designated as Islamic or Islamist. After Angela Merkel announced in August 2015 that "we can manage" the absorption of 800,000 mostly Middle Eastern migrants, Holocaust education programs for refugees have also placed on suspicious Muslims a burden of philosemitic betterment.[41] Even before the Bundestag passed its (nonbinding) anti-BDS resolution in 2019, "antisemitism commissioners" in the Federal Republic have castigated outspoken defenders of Palestinians – including leftist Jews – as arch-violators of German civility – the new "villains of the German state." What has been called "philosemitic McCarthyism" only intensified in the aftermath of October 7, 2023.[42]

Assessing the costs of philosemitism for Jews, Muslims, and Palestinians, as shown in this book, must form an integral part of its study: Investigating "love" requires permanent attention to its oppressiveness. Yet if seen from the long perspective of modern

[40] Jeffrey Peck, *Being Jewish in the New Germany* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 14.

[41] Irit Dekel and Esra Özyürek, "The Logic of the Fight against Antisemitism in Germany in Three Cultural Shifts," *Patterns of Prejudice* 56, no. 2–3 (2022): 157–187; Esra Özyürek, *Subcontractors of Guilt: Holocaust Memory and Muslim Belonging in Postwar Germany* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2023); Peter Kuras, "The Strange Logic of Germany's Antisemitism Bureaucrats" in *Jewish Currents* (Spring 2023), available at: https://jewishcurrents.org/the-strange-logic-of-germanys-antisemitism-bureaucrats.

[42] "Palestine between German Memory of Politics and (De-) Colonial Thought" (anonymous author), *Journal of Genocide Research* 23, no. 3 (2021): 374–382; Anna-Esther Younes, "Fighting Anti-Semitism in Contemporary Germany," *Islamophobia Studies Journal* 5, no. 2 (2020): 249–266; Susan Neiman, "Historical Reckoning Gone Haywire," in *The New York Review of Books*, October 19, 2023.

European history, the a priori valorization of Jews – dead or alive, figural or real – remains a revolutionary hallmark of the post-Holocaust period. In 1952, Wiedergutmachung – "to make good again" through monetary reparations – inaugurated the age of official philosemitism in West Germany: the Bonn Republic's reintegration into the community of nations through good will and "reconciliation" with Jews. Wiedergutwerdung, however, captures a deeper reparative process not limited to guilty Germans: "to become good again" through the befriending of the Jew "who, in Europe at least, is the most radical incarnation, indeed the epitome, of the stranger."[43] Grand narratives of post-1945 European history now conclude with reflections on Holocaust memory as "the pertinent European reference."[44] Yet even if initially at the periphery of public culture, the reconstruction of European morality through "the Jew" already began in 1945: a civilizational turning point hardly imaginable before the Jewish catastrophe.

Beyond Lachrymosity

To write the history of post-Holocaust Europe as that of "philosemitic Europe," however, requires departure from "the lachrymose conception of Jewish history." Nearly a century ago, Salo W. Baron enjoined students of the Jewish past to not only highlight persecution but also positive features of Jewish–non-Jewish interactions. The Jewish American scholar reiterated this view after World War II. "One should not be surprised," he wrote in 1956, "if historians of the future, would date the beginning of real Jewish emancipation, not with 1787 or 1790 or even 1848, but rather with the first postwar year of 1946." Only eleven years had passed since the liberation of death camps, yet Baron portrayed the post-Holocaust era as the starting point of "real" Jewish inclusion into Western modernity.[45] The "lachrymose conception" nonetheless continued to appeal to European Jewish intellectuals. "What is called Jewish history is but one long contemplation of Jewish misfortune," wrote Albert Memmi in 1962. The Tunis-born Parisian acknowledged "that we may have entered upon a wholly new period of history, one that would see at last the progressive liquidation of that oppression the

[43] On "becoming good again" in postwar Germany, see Eike Geisel (1945–1997), *Die Wiedergutwerdung der Deutschen* (Berlin: Edition Tiamat, 2015); Zygmunt Bauman, "Jews and Other Europeans, Old and New," *European Judaism* 42, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 121–133.

[44] Tony Judt, *A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2005), 803.

[45] Salo W. Baron, "The Modern Age" in Leo W. Scharz (ed.), *Great Ages and Ideas of the Jewish People* (New York: Random House, 1956), 315–484.

Jews have suffered for so long." For the time being, however, Memmi ruled out improvement. Although transplanted North African Jews found a welcoming new home in France, the author of Portrait of the Jew doubted "that the generosity of a few men, feigned or real (…) can change the essential substance of my situation." Before liberation either through revolution or Zionism – and in Memmi's subsequent writings, through Zionism alone – "a tremendous negativity continues to limit, stifle and cut off the life of every Jew."[46] In London, the Trotskyite émigré Isaac Deutscher warned in 1968 against "the impression that antisemitism is a spent force because in this our welfare state people are, on the whole, contented and satisfied." Under the surface, "barbarity is there (…) always ready to surge up." For the fierce critique of post-1967 Israel, the only choice of the diaspora Jew was not Zionism, but to remain an "eternal protester."[47] From Brussels, the Austrian exile and Auschwitz survivor Jean Améry faulted the Left for failing to realize that "the Jew is still worse off than Frantz Fanon's colonized individual." Unlike Memmi and Deutscher, Améry had no escape route: "for each and every Jew, whether he grasps this or not, is abandoned to a catastrophic fate, he is a 'catastrophe Jew'."[48]

The "non-Jewish–Jewish" historian Eric Hobsbawm was among the first European intellectuals to challenge lachrymosity. "A large part of the world," he wrote in 1980, now welcomed Jews "on their merits." Hobsbawm also observed in the West "a striking though not universal recession of anti-semitism." The distinguished professor upped the ante twenty-five years later. "There is no historic precedent," he argued in 2005, "for the triumph of the Aufklärung [Enlightenment] in the post-Holocaust diaspora." A few years before his death, Hobsbawm added that "the Jews, inside and outside Israel, have enormously benefited from the bad conscience of a Western world that had refused Jewish immigration in the 1930s before committing or failing to resist genocide." He nonetheless wondered "how much of that bad conscience, which virtually eliminated anti-semitism in the West for sixty years and produced a golden era for its diaspora, is left today?" His question, however, did not indicate belated conversion to the "eternal antisemitism" thesis. The Marxist historian long critical of Zionism blamed the end

[46] Albert Memmi, "Portrait of the Jew" (1962) in Jonathan Judaken and Michael Lejman (eds.), *The Albert Memmi Reader* (Lincoln, NE: The University of Nebraska Press, 2020), 69–96.
[47] Isaac Deutscher, *The Non-Jewish Jew* (1968) (London: Verso, 2017), 48.
[48] Jean Améry, "Virtuous Antisemitism" (1969) in Marlene Gallner (ed.), *Essays in Antisemitism, Anti-Zionism, and the Left* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2021), 34–40.

of the "golden era" on the actions of the Israeli state, not on the rise of "new antisemitism" in the twenty-first century.[49]

Proponents of the term "new Judeophobia," to the contrary, breathed new life into the "lachrymose conception."[50] A glum undercurrent, to be sure, had always been noticeable in ruminations on Jewish existence in post-Holocaust Europe. As late as the 1990s, pessimists predicted "a return to the ghetto" and the "vanishing" of the European Jewish diaspora: The continent was always more "accursed" than "glorious" in accounts of ever-dying Jewish communities.[51] Yet in the early twenty-first century, the discourse of "new antisemitism" intensified these anxieties. "What we are witnessing today," stated Britain's Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks in 2004, "is the second great mutation of antisemitism in modern times, from racial antisemitism to religious anti-Zionism."[52] According to this view, the devilish Zionist replaced the demonic Jew: the symbol of evil in the modern world and the embodiment of imperialism, racism, and oppressive whiteness. Under the guise of antiracism, confidently proclaimed the decipherers of "new antisemitism," anti-Zionism became the new "rumor about the Jews." Its propagators were not only pro-Palestinian activists or Muslims in Europe and the global south: The European Left also allegedly reverted to the grammar of antisemitism by turning Israel into a "collective Jew" and the "Zio" into the arch-enemy of human emancipation.[53] For denouncers of "Islamo-Fascism," or liberals alarmed by "new antisemitism" after the year 2000, European Jewish history returned to its tragic path after a short and illusory reprieve.

[49] Eric J. Hobsbawm, "Are We Entering a New Era of Anti-Semitism?" in Helen Fein (ed.), *The Persisting Question* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1987), 374–379; "Benefits of Diaspora" in *The London Review of Books*, October 20, 2005; "Responses to the War in Gaza," *London Review of Books*, January 29, 2009.

[50] The French scholar Pierre-André Taguieff coined the term in *La nouvelle judéophobie* (Paris: Fayard, 2002). For a critical history of "new antisemitism," see Anthony Lerman, *What Happened to Antisemitism? Redefinition and the Myth of the "Collective Jew"* (London: Pluto Press, 2022).

[51] On David Vital's *The Future of the Jews* (1990) and Bernard Wasserstein's *Vanishing Diaspora* (1996), see Michael Brenner, "The Ever-Dying Jewry? Prophets of Doom and the Survival European Jewry" in Gideon Reuveni and David Franklin (eds.), *The Future of the German Jewish Past* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2021), 76–89; Jehuda Reinharz and Yaacov Shavit, *Glorious, Accursed Europe: An Essay on Jewish Ambivalence* (Boston: Brandeis University Press, 2010).

[52] Cited in Brian Klug, "The Myth of New Antisemitism" in *The Nation*, January 15, 2004, available at: www.thenation.com/article/archive/myth-new-anti-semitism/.

[53] See among others Alvin Rosenfeld (ed.), *Deciphering the New Antisemitism* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2015); Jonathan Judaken, "So What's New? Rethinking the 'New Antisemitism' in a Global Age," *Patterns of Prejudice* 42, nos. 4–5 (2008): 531–560.

The lachrymose conception, however, also found its way into recent studies of philosemitism. A long tradition of German-Jewish criticism had already bestowed upon the term a negative meaning. "The threatening nature of [philosemitism's] benevolence" unsurprisingly remained a dominant theme in a large edited volume on the topic published in Germany in 2009.[54] Scholars across the Atlantic similarly stressed "the intersections between philosemitism and antisemitism" in Anglo-American culture. When they are not "more insidious than transparent antisemitism," charged Phyllis Lassner and Lara Trubowitz, actions and sentiments directed in favor of Jews provide an "opportunity to criticize Jews and Jewish culture for the failure to live up to the ideal other groups have interpreted as Jewish." The phenomenon, according to this view, always manifests itself through instrumentalized fondness for Jews, Judaism, or Jewish culture, as well as overemphasis of imputed Jewish traits. It can also take the form of demonstrative support for the state of Israel, although liberal critics of pro-Israelism in the United States traditionally had in mind the millennialism of evangelical Christians, not normative pro-Zionism in American politics. Behind this excessive attention, critics regularly point out, hostility lives on. Philosemitism always replicates antisemitism by setting Jews apart as radically different people; by borrowing stereotypes from the vocabulary of Jew-hatred, or by splitting Jews, not unlike snobbish antisemitism, into "good" and "bad" categories. A specialist in German-Jewish history delivered the lachrymose coup de grace. "A philo-Semitic society can desire Jews or be repelled by them," wrote Gabriel Motzkin, "but it cannot accept them, because it always has the possibility of being anti-Semitic."[55]

Adding to these deficiencies, argue lachrymose critics of philosemitism, is the contemporary cult of Holocaust memory. The atoning West, contended a prize-winning Harvard professor in 2021, only loves murdered Jews who can "teach us something." With the help of Jewish educators or museum curators, Holocaust remembrance culture in the United States and Europe, or as far as China, has turned Jews into people who "for moral and educational purposes" are supposed to be dead. Reflecting on a "haunted present," Dara Horn only saw around

[54] Moshe Zuckermann, "Aspeckte des Philosemitismus" in Irene A. Diekmann and Elke-Vera Kotowski (eds.), *Geliebter Feind, Gehasster Freund: Antisemitismus und Philosemitismus in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, op. cit., 61–72.

[55] Gabriel Motzkin, "Love and Bildung for Hannah Arendt" in Steven Aschheim (ed.), *Hannah Arendt in Jerusalem* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001), 291, cited in Ofri Ilany, "Feverish Preference": Philosemitism, Anti-antisemitism, and Their Critics" in Scott Ury and Guy Miron, *Antisemitism and the Politics of History* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2024), 167–186.

her rampant exploitation of Jewish death "to flatter the living."[56] From this perspective, the study of philosemitism only becomes "a new way of thinking about antisemitism and the Jewish Question."[57] After centuries of prejudice, discrimination, and violence, Jews are now purportedly the victims of "love." Although a counternarrative charges that contemporary philosemitism – especially in its radical German form – suppresses above all Palestinian, Muslim, or dissident Jewish voices critical of Israel, here its chief sufferers remain the Jews.

More nuanced commentators have resisted panic. Not "the reverse side of the antisemitic coin," argued Adam Sutcliffe and Jonathan Karp in a landmark volume, positive perceptions of Jews are best comprehended "within their broader intellectual framework."[58] Like Samuel Moyn, who in a book on Holocaust memory in France conceptualized philosemitism as a "cultural code," they approach the phenomenon "without a predetermined assessment."[59] What matters is the "significance and function" of philosemitism – or for Frances Tanzer, how this discourse shaped cultural meaning in the postwar period – not the unmasking of deceitful Judeophiles or the celebration of genuine ones.[60] Maurice Samuels likewise enjoined scholars "to investigate how defense, love, and admiration of Jews and Judaism (…) serve as vehicles for specific political agenda."[61] To investigate philosemitism, proposed Anthony D. Kauders, is not to search for love only to discover "that it is nowhere to be found." It is instead an exploration of "discussed Jews" in politics, culture, and thought.[62] David J. Wertheim, however, views the legitimation of non-Jewish ideas through "the Jew" not as philosemitism

[56] Dara Horn, *People Love Dead Jews: Reports from a Haunted Present* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2021).

[57] Phyllis Lassner and Lara Trubowitz (eds.), *Antisemitism and Philosemitism in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries: Representing Jews, Jewishness and Modern Culture* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008), 7–17.

[58] Adam Sutcliffe and Jonathan Karp, *Philosemitism in History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 1–26. See also Sutcliffe, "The Unfinished History of Philosemitism," *Jewish Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (2011): 64–68.

[59] Samuel Moyn, "Antisemitism, Philosemitism and the Rise of Holocaust Memory," *Patterns of Prejudice* 43, no. 1 (2009): 1–16; *A Holocaust Controversy: The Treblinka Affair in Postwar France* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, 2005).

[60] Frances Tanzer, *Vanishing Vienna: Modernism, Philosemitism and Jews in a Postwar City* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2024).

[61] Maurice Samuels, "Philosemitism" in Sol Goldberg, Scott Ury, and Kalman Weiser (eds.), *Key Concepts in the Study of Antisemitism* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 201–214.

[62] Anthony D. Kauders, "History as Censure: 'Repression' and 'Philo-Semitism' in Postwar Germany" in *History and Memory* 15, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2003): 97–12. On Jews as "subjects of conversation," see Jacques Berlinerblau, "On Philo-Semitism," *Program for Jewish Civilization Occasional Papers* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University, 2007).

but allosemitism – the term coined by Zygmunt Bauman to describe the reification of Jewish alterity, whether positive or negative. Yet as seen in Chapter 7, the use of "the Jew" to legitimate democracy, or postnationalism, necessarily entailed valorization. In Germany, wrote the philosopher Jürgen Habermas in 2012, "fatherless" postwar generations learned from Jewish thinkers "magnanimous enough to return to the country that had driven them out (…) how to distinguish the traditions that are worthy of being continued from a corrupt intellectual heritage."[63] After the Holocaust, "the Jew as legitimation" continued as in the past to serve as "evidence for the truth of non-Jewish beliefs": Yet it also revealed the normalization of Jewish alterity in the Western liberal imagination.[64]

This book takes its cue from these critical insights. It nonetheless offers its own definition of philosemitism, a word as deficient as antisemitism but nonetheless reflective of historical experience. Here "love for the Semites" is not the syndrome of people who claim to delight in the Jews' existence, harbor admiration for their achievements, or feel irresistible attraction to Judaism. This study likewise leaves aside imaginary, allegorized, or figural "good Jews" in literature and thought. In the following pages, philosemitism is not (only) a dehumanizing narcissistic projection – or Judenfetisch in the German context.[65] The term connotes instead a befriending process: the emergence of a "Jewish friend" in mainstream European politics and culture, with particular emphasis on Germany and France. Post-Holocaust declarations of amity, of course, have never been devoid of ambiguity. To befriend Jews or Israel in return of absolution – the German philosemitic trade-off since 1949 – always involved "political opportunism and utility."[66] Christian revisions of anti-Judaic teachings, momentous as they were, did not dash hopes of Jewish entry into the Church. In critical theory or politics, the rejection of antisemitism did not require appreciation of Jews as Jews. Anti-antisemites, charged Elad Lapidot, prefer their Jews "delivered of substance."[67] Yet since 1945, and with greater vigor after 1989,

[63] Jürgen Habermas, "Jewish Philosophers and Sociologists in the Early Federal Republic: A Recollection" in J. Habermas (ed.), *The Lure of Technocracy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), 105–118.

[64] David J. Wertheim, "Introduction" in D. Wertheim (ed.), *The Jew as Legitimation: Jewish-Gentile Relations beyond Antisemitism and Philosemitism* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 1–16.

[65] Deborah Feldman, *Judenfetisch* (Berlin: Luchterhand Literaturverlag, 2023).

[66] Frank Stern, "Antisemitism and Historical Consciousness: German Attitudes towards Jews and Israel," *Patterns of Prejudice* 27, no. 2 (1993): 29–38; Daniel Marwecki, *Absolution? Israel und die deutsche Staatsräson* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2024).

[67] Elad Lapidot, "A Critique of Anti-Antisemitism" in *Tablet*, May 19, 2021; *Jews Out of the Question: A Critique of Anti-Anti Semitism* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2020).

empathetic discussions of Jews in the liberal public sphere have been premised on abhorrence of antisemitism, acknowledgement of guilt and shame, or acceptance of Zionism as just cause, without counterbalancing demands for Jewish "regeneration." Verbesserung or "amelioration," once a prerequisite of Jewish civic incorporation, became instead the burden of liberal Europe: the befriending of Jewishness as "admission ticket" into post-Holocaust morality.

When defined as a priori politics of friendship, philosemitism since 1945 is best comprehended as a spectrum of iterations.[68] On one end stands anti-antisemitism. Opposition to anti-Jewish prejudice, argued Jonathan Judaken, is only a category "for talking about those who have defended Jews or Judaism in contexts of antisemitism." It is distinct from philosemitism, which commonly "implies a love of Jews and Judaism."[69] Yet if anti-antisemitism never promised amity, "opposition to prejudices and stereotypes related to Jews, Judaism, and Jewishness" after 1945 was not mere color-blind universalism: anti-antisemitism, including as "instrument of domination,"[70] constitutes in this book the baseline of European philosemitism. Holocaust memory stands at midpoint of the philosemitic spectrum. In the following pages, the recognition – or sacralization – of the Jewish genocide is a permanent gauge of pro-Jewish friendship. German philosemitism, including the radicalization of "remembrance culture" since the start of the twenty-first century, constitutes a third typology: In Europe, the epicenter of the ever-problematic valorization of Jews after the Shoah remains the former "land of perpetrators."

Entangled with anti-antisemitism, Holocaust memory, and compensatory Judenfreundlichkeit, is philo-Zionism. "The valorization of Jewish Otherness" after the Shoah, wrote Brian Klug, simultaneously led to the "valorization of Israel."[71] For Palestinians and their defenders, Western Europe's support of the Jewish state from 1948 to 1967, and the European Union's continuing acceptance of Zionism's

[68] On the "multiple ways to be a philosemite," see Pierre-André Taguieff, "Antisémitisme ou philosémitisme: un problème mal posé," *Cités* 3, no. 87 (2021): 99–112.

[69] Jonathan Judaken, "Between Philosemitism and Antisemitism: The Frankfurt School's Anti-Antisemitism" in Phyllis Lassner and Lara Trubowitz (eds.), *Antisemitism and Philosemitism in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries*, op. cit., 23–46; *Jean-Paul Sartre and the Jewish Question: Anti-Antisemitism and the Politics of the French Intellectual* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 20.

[70] Moshe Zuckermann, *"Antisemit!": Ein vorfurf als Herrschaftsintrument* (Vienna: Promedia Verlag, 2010).

[71] Brian Klug, "An Emblematic Embrace: New Europe, The Jewish State, and the Palestinian Question" in Bashir Bashir and Leila Farsakh (eds.), *The Arab and Jewish Question: Geographies of Engagement in Palestine and Beyond* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020), 47–67.

legitimacy, whitewashed European sins "at the expense of another."[72] The penitent recognition of Jews "as the classical victims of history," famously wrote Edward Said, proceeded with utter indifference for "the victims of the victims."[73] Yet while motivated by guilt, or deflection of responsibility, various modes of positive identification with the Jewish state also made "Israelophilia" a pillar of post-Holocaust philosemitism: a phenomenon whose languages evolved throughout the postwar decades.

Befriending the Jew: From 1945 to the Present

Although volumes on "old" and "new" antisemitism abound, there is to this day not a single synthetic history of philosemitism in postwar Europe. Completed prior to October 7, 2023 – philosemitism "after Gaza," to quote Pankaj Mishra, will require separate discussion -- this granular account of the continent's change of heart after the Holocaust treads in uncharted territory. This book, however, begins with the resurgence and reinvention of antisemitism in Western Europe in the aftermath of World War II (Chapter 2). To understand why anti-antisemitism became a distinctive philosophical, theological, and political project, requires attention to the resilience of Judeophobia in the late 1940s and 1950s. In Marshall Plan Europe, however, a new moratorium on public antisemitism demarcated democracy from fascism. Although unrepentant Nazis, former pro-German collaborators, or traditionalist Catholics transgressed the taboo, the delegitimation of antisemitism in the public arena forced Judeophobia to take cover behind favorable views of Jews: Tactical philosemitism in occupied Germany and the early Federal Republic is a case in point.

Chapter 3 documents the mutation of the most preeminent form of non-Jewish defense of Jews since the late nineteenth century. From mere disapproval of prejudice, anti-antisemitism evolved in 1945 into a singular struggle against Jew-hatred. Leftist parties in liberated Western Europe continued to oppose antisemitism in the name of universal antiracism. But in Britain and France, anti-antisemite pioneers such as the Labour MP Richard Crossman, the Anglican scholar James Parkes, and above all the philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, reframed antisemitism as a special ill – the problem of "contaminated" non-Jewish society.

[72] Ussama Makdisi, "Atonement at the Expense of Another" in *New Fascism Syllabus* (2021), available at: https://newfascismsyllabus.com/opinions/the-catechism-debate/atonement-at-the-expense-of-another/.

[73] Edward Said, *The Question of Palestine* (New York: Viking Press, 1992), xxi.

From London, George Orwell offered the first postwar critique of this view. To single out the Jew as "a species of animals different from ourselves," he wrote against Sartre's typification of the "Jew" and the "antisemite" in Réflexions sur la question juive (1946), could only "make antisemitism more prevalent that it was before." The Parisian thinker's decisive contribution to "philosemitic Europe," however, was to turn the "war on antisemitism" into a politics of pro-Jewish solidarity – a progressive stance also accepting of Zionism until 1967 and beyond.

Chapter 4 situates philosemitism within the discourse of postwar humanism. Despite a burgeoning revolt against the Western conception of "man" in French and anti-colonial philosophy, "everyday humanism" remained omnipresent in early postwar culture. How did this post-fascist humanist consensus affect perceptions of the Holocaust, Jewish refugees, and Israel during the first two decades of Western European democracy? Until the late 1950s, the humanist reprobation of Nazi inhumanity universalized the Holocaust as the catastrophe of mankind. Sympathetic observers of the new state of Israel went further. The Jewish homeland, for its admirers, not only rescued but also fulfilled the promise of European humanism.

Chapter 5 reconstructs the tortuous path of "Judeo-Christian Europe" from 1945 to the Vatican's Nostra Aetate declaration of 1965. Contrary to Cold War America, where Judeo-Christian affinities accelerated the mutation of Jews into "white folks," the concept was met with fierce resistance in postwar Europe. The founding fathers of European integration, for their part, did not invoke "Judeo-Christian values" to advocate unity: The phrase only gained popularity with the rise of post-1989 anti-immigrant populism. Yet for a network of Catholic and Protestant churchmen, the tragedy of the Holocaust required epochal rapprochement with Judaism. In French catholic intellectual circles, "Judeo-Christian Europe" also meant the Judeo-Christianization of the Holocaust: an appropriation of the crime which also elevated the Jew to the rank of proximate friend.

Chapter 6 follows "the long 1960s" in Western Europe. Although the decade began with a transnational "Swastika Epidemic," it was a pivotal moment for philosemitism in the postwar period. The passing of the first hate-speech laws, the decline of antisemitism in public opinion polls, and the entry of the Holocaust into public culture reflected this new climate. Students who in 1967–68 imagined themselves as "long-hair ersatz Jews" in West Germany, or chanted "We are all German Jews" in Paris, admittedly distorted the meaning of the Holocaust. In the Federal Republic, the New Left also rebelled against the official philosemitism of the "fascistoid" Bonn Republic or the pro-Israel exultations of the

Springer press. But "the year of the barricades" had long-lasting consequences for European philosemitism. Although one outcome of the student movement in West Germany was ultra-leftism, another one was memory activism. In France, critical interrogations of the Vichy past soon followed the May events: The path to erinnerungskultur [remembrance culture] and devoir de mémoire [duty of memory] began in 1968.

The development of Jewish studies and Holocaust research in academia during the 1970s and 1980s, or fascination with the "Jewish sign" in postmodern philosophy, were other legacies of 1968 in higher education and thought. But as shown in Chapter 7, another "1968" informed liberal visions of cosmopolitan Europe during the last decade of the Cold War. Deprived of the "privilege of working" after the Prague Spring, and established in France since 1975, the Czech émigré novelist Milan Kundera almost single-handedly prompted the nostalgic rediscovery of Mitteleuropa in the West. His influential essay, "The Tragedy of Central Europe" (1983), romanticized Central European Jewish intellectuals as symbols of lost but retrievable supranational Europe. Advocates of the European Union, however, grounded cosmopolitanism on the memory of the Shoah – the birth certificate of a new Europe allegedly triumphant over nationalism, antisemitism, and racism. Competing memories of communist oppression impeded the export of Holocaust remembrance across the former Iron Curtain. Yet post-Communist countries developed their own forms of Shoah memorialization, even if "to control the way in which the Holocaust is remembered, understood, and interpreted." At the start of the twenty-first century, noted Tony Judt, the commemoration of murdered Jews had become "our contemporary European entry ticket."[74]

Islamophobic and anti-immigrant parties in the European Union also found benefits in philosemitism. Postwar Europe had until then resisted Judeo-Christian civilizationalism, but Islamophobia – coupled with Palestinophobia – precipitated this conversion. The antisemites of yesterday, joined by culturally progressive "Enlightenment fundamentalists," yearned for a Jewish–Christian alliance against "Islamo-fascism" and Muslim immigrants. Muscular Israel now symbolized Western resistance against Islam: For illiberal philosemites, the Jewish state showed weak liberal Europe the path to its survival. In Germany, "remembrance culture" hardened into a key symbol of national identity during the long Angela Merkel chancellorship (2005–21). In the Federal Republic, the nationalization of Holocaust

[74] Jelena Subotić, *Yellow Star, Red Star: Holocaust Remembrance after Communism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019), 206; Tony Judt, *Past Imperfect*, op. cit., 803.

memory translated into permanent alert against "imported" antisemitism, shielded the Holocaust from comparability, affirmed Germany's commitment to Israel's security in the name of "reason of state," and demarcated "redeemed Germans" from dangerous challengers of national memory culture.

Since the start of the twenty-first century, what has been called "reactionary philosemitism" has been subjected to radical critique. "State philosemitism," argued decolonial writers, drives a wedge between good "white" Jews on one hand, and bad racialized groups on the other, Muslims chiefly among them. It is violent when the cult of the Holocaust erases the suffering of others. And it is oppression when the governance of anti-antisemitism polices or stifles pro-Palestinian voices. "Shoot Sartre!," proposed the French-Algerian spokesperson of the Parti des Indigènes de la République Houria Bouteldja. By this she meant the enduring legacy of the philosopher's deceased in 1980: a progressive politics devoid of categorical rejection of Zionism and complicit in the weaponization of antisemitism against minorities of color.[75]

As the enumeration of the book's main topics indicates, "Philosemitic Europe" is a contested concept whose expressions have constantly evolved. The "Jewish question," we are recurrently warned, always "returns" through the form of hostility. Yet after 1945, the "Jewish question," or the problem of Jewish difference and incorporation in European societies, lost its hegemonic antisemitic connotation. It became instead foregrounded in the language of philosemitism writ large. Europe, as suggested in the book's conclusion, may have entered the post-philosemitic age. Yet while counterintuitive or implausible to many, the phrase can nonetheless be rid of quotation marks: Philosemitic Europe is not a love story, but the history of Europe from the Holocaust to the present.

[75] Houria Bouteldja, *Whites, Jews, and Us: Towards a Politics of Revolutionary Love* (South Pasadena, CA: Semiotext(e), 2016); Alana Lentin, *Why Race Still Matters* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2020); Steven Friedman, *Good Jew, Bad Jew: Racism, Anti-Semitism, and the Assault on Meaning* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2023).