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Global Anti-Semitism in World-Historical Perspective: An Introduction

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Global Anti-Semitism in World-Historical Perspective: An Introduction

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Abstract: This introduction to the Spring 2009 issue of *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge* begins with a discussion of “The Articulation and Re-Articulation of Anti-Semitism” in a world-historical perspective, focusing on such topics as “Anti-Semitism in the Longue-Durée,” “Christian Europe’s Final Solutions,” and “Israel and Global Anti-Semitism.” It then follows with a survey of the volume’s articles which were part of an international conference entitled, “The Post-September 11 New Ethnic/Racial Configurations in Europe and the United States: The Case of Anti-Semitism,” organized by Lewis Gordon and Ramón Grosfoguel at the Maison des Sciences de l’Homme (MSH) in Paris on June 29–30, 2007. The two scholars along with Eric Mielants also served as co-editors of this issue. Part of a series inaugurated by a discussion on Islamophobia, the conference brought a majority Jewish group of scholars together in the hope of bringing to the forum a critical exchange and conversation among the participants. The discussion presented in the introduction is not necessarily representative of the views of the scholars included in the collection.

The articles collected in this Spring 2009 issue of *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge* were part of an international conference entitled, “The Post-September 11 New Ethnic/Racial Configurations in Europe and the United

States: The Case of Anti-Semitism,” organized by Lewis Gordon and Ramón Grosfoguel at the Maison des Sciences de l’Homme (MSH) in Paris on June 29–30, 2007. Part of a series inaugurated by a discussion on Islamophobia, the conference

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PART I: THE ARTICULATIONS AND RE-ARTICULATIONS OF ANTI-SEMITISM

Anti-Semitism in the Longue-Durée

A contemporary discussion of anti-Semitism requires reflecting on the emergence of Christian Europe; Zionism; and the state of Israel. After the fall of the ancient Roman Empire in late antiquity, it was Christianity, at first under the rubric of the Holy Roman Empire, that organized under Christendom during the Middle Ages the territories that subsequently became Europe. Since Christianity rose out of ongoing struggles among the colonized people of Judea, many of whom spread across the Roman world during a period of ancient Jewish proselytizing, the consequence was a constant presence of Jews among Christians who were by the Middle Ages a hegemonic group. Moreover, although there were many Jews living outside of Judea, the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 ACE, the centerpiece of Jewish life, created an entirely Diasporic Jewish world in which Jews became quintessential minorities among Christians and, in other places, other "Gentiles."

The situation for Jews in Christian lands was tenuous, marked by restrictions on movement, domicile, and ownership, and, on many occasions, violent persecution. The Christian conversion of the Emperor Constantine in 312 ACE led to Christianity as the state religion of Rome and edicts making Jewish proselytizing a capital offense. This historic situation of

Jews was further affected by the emergence of Islam in the seventh century ACE and its spread from West Asia to create Islamic Empires with a reach extending into the Indian and Pacific Oceans to the East and the Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic Ocean to the West. As Christendom was heavily influenced by the cultures that became known as "European," Islamic Civilization was based on Arab culture and brought prominence to Arabic, a linguistic framework with many manifestations among various peoples in the Arab Peninsula and subsequently across the areas of Muslim conquest. Even though Islamic civilization covered many cultures and linguistic traditions, Arabic became the lingua franca of the Islamic World.

As with Christianity, Islam was at first indexed in terms of the revealed religion of a common people in the region of West Asia known today as the Middle East. But unlike Christianity, which became more associated with peoples outside of the Middle East, the Arab cultural dimensions of Islam presented cultural mores that required fewer radical adjustments for the Jewish peoples spread across the by then Muslim-governed territories, and the added category of "people of the book" in Islam enabled a status for Jews and Christians that was absent in Christian-governed territories with regard to non-Christians. When the North African Muslims, the Moors, expanded the reach of the Islamic world into Iberia in the eighth century and formed Andalusian civilization, whose impact was felt as far north as southern France, the situation of Jews was transformed to an in-between condition: For the Christian peoples, the Jews were outsiders within and were more associated with the North African and West Asian civilizations, although many in those regions were descendants of people who came to Judaism during the period of Jews actively seeking proselytes prior to the period of Constantine; for the Muslims, they were accepted as of similar if

not the same origins, because Islam was a proselytizing religion from the same areas of the world, but they faced limits because Jews were not Muslims. Crucial during this period, however, as David Sasha (2008) has pointed out, the Arab allowance for Arabic to facilitate hybridization allowed the possibility of Arabic and Arab Jews, which enabled the existence, for a time, of both Muslim and Jew to be regarded at times as a unity in the face of Christendom.

The focus on anti-Semitism in this collection raises the question, then, of how ancient and Medieval versions of anti-Jewish practices should be interpreted, especially since even the term “Semite” came about as an effort in eighteenth-century French and German scholarship to organize Arabic, Aramaic, and Hebrew under a single linguistic nomenclature, which was crystallized in the nineteenth century in the work of the French scholar Ernest Renan. Contemporary discussion of anti-Semitism prior to this period is, in effect, a retroactive organizing of the past in the language of the present. It may be better to say “proto-anti-Semitism” when referring to this form of hatred prior to modern times, but given the impact of the term, we will simply refer to “anti-Semitism” to refer to the circumstances that link the discussion from the Middle Ages to modern times.

A consequence of Islamic control of the Mediterranean was a limitation of trade that locked in Christendom from its southern and Eastern borders. The economies of Christian territories suffered greatly during this period, which led to the Crusades, whose expansion was stopped by the Ottomans of Turkey in the East. In the West, the “Reconquest,” as this effort was called under the leadership of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, culminated in the fall of Grenada in 1492.

Many Jews were, during this eight hundred years period of Moorish rule in Iberia, linked to the Arab world, which meant, also, that anti-Judaism fused with

Islamophobia. Thus, anti-Semitism has three components from its inception: “anti-Jewish anti-Semitism,” “anti-Arab/Muslim anti-Semitism,” and, often overlooked because rarely formulated, “Anti-Afro-Arab/Muslim anti-Semitism.” The year 1492 was marked by events that brought these components together in familiar ways: Jews and Muslims were ordered to convert to Christianity, and those who refused were subsequently expelled from the Iberian Peninsula through pogroms and massacres (Baer 1993; Gerber 1992; Bresc 2001). Recall that the people who became known as Semitic people were characterized as coming from what we currently refer to as the Middle East or Western Asia and Northeastern Africa, and this group included Arabs as well as Hebrews, the tribal designation from which Jewish people emerged. Recall as well that the term itself has origins in philological research in eighteenth-century France and Germany, where it referred to linguistic types. By the nineteenth-century, it was transformed from a linguistic ascription to a full-fledged racial category for the mixed-race group of peoples of East Africa, West Asia, and the southern parts of Europe that were meeting points of those geographical zones.

The people who became known as “Semites” were, and to a large extent still are, what in recent racial language—as observed by Charles Finch III (1991)—is referred to as “mulattoes.” It was an ascription pushed by Arthur de Gobineau, the father of modern racism, in his discussion of Jewish people in explicitly racial terms in his *Essai sur l'Inegalite de Races Humaine* (1853–1855). The concept itself worked within an economy of fixed points or centers, through which a theology of meaning *as meaning*—of organized centers from which contaminants and degraded matrices, as Gil Anidjar (2008) argued, echoing the poststructural observations of Jacques Derrida—flowed, produced, and organized a new race retroactively placed into

the past, including the distant past, of human difference.

Mixture was a source of much anxiety and fear during the processes of expulsion of Jews and Moors from Iberia, since a consequence of eight hundred years of Islamic rule brought together a mixture of people with the usual logic of identity and identification, especially with regard to problems of passing and hidden, supposedly essential, substantial modes of being. The Spanish Inquisition, inaugurated in 1478 in the Christian territories, expanded with that of Christendom in 1492 and continued into the nineteenth century. From the outset, many Andalusian Jews and Moors fled to North Africa and the Ottoman-controlled territories. The period that followed is one in which Jews among Arabs and Arab Jews lived in a Muslim world to the South and East while a Christian world dominated the north and eventually most of the globe.

As with Andalusia, most of the Muslim regimes in North Africa and West Asia recognized Jewish minority rights (Kramer 2006) and served as refuges for Jews. As David Sasha (2008) explains:

Traditionally in the Arab world, culture was a unifying factor and religion a divisive one. Having used the term divisive, I do not mean to imply that the division was in any way seen as illegitimate or intrusive. Each faith community in the Arab world was provided with communal autonomy while the maintenance of Islam as the dominant and dominating religion was clearly affirmed. But under this system Jews were able to conduct their intra-communal affairs in relative ease having established internal institutions and entities to administer the affairs of the community without the interference of the Islamic authorities.

This is not to say that there was no discrimination or persecution of Jews in the earlier periods and early modern periods of Muslim rule. On December 30, 1066, for instance, 1,500 Jewish families were massacred in Grenada by Muslim mobs (Perez 2005:36–37). Crucial during this period, however, was that the political regimes varied across the Muslim world. Andalusian Jews of that period fled, for instance, to more tolerant Arab communities to the east, as was the case of Rabbi Maimonides, the most famous Jewish philosopher of that period. Similarly, the Christian territories were not uniformly inhospitable, so there were also Jews who also fled to more northern Christian areas. In the Muslim world, there were some periods of pronounced efforts to force Jews to convert to Islam, such as those that led the Persian Shah to order the expulsion of Jews from Esfahan or Old Persia in 1656, although the order was never fully implemented; by 1661 (only five years later) the Persian government restored the rights of Jews to practice their religion without repression from the authorities (Littman 1979). In Muslim countries, “*dhimmi*” peoples (“protected peoples”) had minority rights because they were considered to be custodians of scriptural revelations (Perez 2005). In Iran and Muslim-ruled countries in the Mediterranean region, these minorities included Zoroastrians, Christians, and Jews. Thus, the history of discrimination against Jews by Arab Muslims, which we shall call “Semitic Anti-Semitism,” during this period (1492–1948), was not on a par with the anti-Semitic pogroms, extermination, torture, and wide-spread recurring massacres against Jews in Europe. These were fundamentally a Christian European problem that considered both Muslims and Jews outside the natural theological order because they were non-Christian and thus antithetical to the emerging European societies (see, e.g., Kamali 2009). The Christian version was linked to the expansion of

other practices and concepts that transformed the prototypical anti-Semitism into something more grand, to which we now turn.

Recall that the Spanish Christian Monarchy began the European colonial expansion in 1492, the same year they commenced the process of expelling Muslims and Jews from Andalusia (Dussel 1994). The more marked Muslims and Jews were the darker Andalusians, but for those who could “pass,” a program of uprooting their “hidden” Muslimness or Jewishness followed, and for those who were Christian but of darker complexion, presuppositions of their origins made them bearers of a non-Christian past through which illegitimate traits could surface. The colonization of indigenous peoples in the Americas and the succeeding enslavement of Africans in the New World’s colonial plantation economy then inaugurated what is known as the Modern World System. This new system grew out of the theological anthropology that came upon its limits in encounters with people who were not Christians, Jews, or Muslims. More, the reordering of economic relations from medieval kingdoms to global flows of materials led to demands for labor beyond the population resources of the growing centers. A colonial/racist configuration of anti-black and anti-indigenous racism followed with a new international racial division of labor and global temporal organization of Europe into modernity (Quijano 2000). Indigenous American and African peoples were placed below the line that defines the Human (Taylor 2001; Maldonado-Torres 2005, 2006, 2008). They were treated and characterized as sub-humans or simply non-humans (Quijano 1991, 2000; Dussel 1994; Gordon 2008).

With the emergence of a new global racialized capitalist world-economy in the post-Andalusian age (Majid 2003), anti-Semitism acquired new connotations as particular forms of discrimination against

people who exemplified mixtures with West Asian and North African populations. If before 1492, “anti-Jewish anti-Semitism,” “anti-Arab/Muslim anti-Semitism,” and “Anti-Afro-Arab/Muslim anti-Semitism” were defined primarily on the basis of religious discrimination (“praying to the wrong God”) or on theological interpretations of Christian natural theology, the anti-Indigenous and anti-black racism that emerged in the Americas provided these old forms of discrimination with new meanings (Maldonado-Torres 2005; 2006; 2008). Anti-black racism became part of the foundation of modernity and affected the situation of all non-European subjects at the time (Gordon 1995; 2008). With the colonial “boomerang effect” (Césaire 2001), colonial racism in the Americas came back to Europe and redefined old forms of discriminations against Jews and Muslims, including Afro-Muslims or Moors, with the additions of Gypsies, turning them, like blacks and Indigenous peoples, into sub-human or simply non-human (Grosfoguel and Mielants 2006). For centuries Jews in Europe lived the nightmare of anti-Semitism. They faced persecution, torture, and attempted genocide at the hands of dominant Western elites in the new post-Andalusian world, the modern world governed by a slashed and hyphenated series that could be formulated as “Capitalist/Patriarchal Western-centric/Christian-centric Modern/Colonial World-System” (Grosfoguel 2005).

Christian Europe’s Final Solutions

The Holocaust, *Shoa*, represents one of the extreme forms of European FINAL SOLUTIONS, but it was not the only effort to handle Europe’s “Jewish question” in the first half of the twentieth century. Another anti-Semitic “FINAL SOLUTION” contemplated early on by the Germans under national socialism but developed by the British was to transfer European Jews out

of Europe (Segev 2001).

Given the British Empire's colonial control of the sacred land of Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the former Ottoman-governed territory of Palestine, they began with the support of the European Zionists to export large numbers of European Jews to what is defined by these monotheistic religions as the Holy Land (Segev 2001; Gerber 2006; Pappé 2006). This began a process of settler colonialism, where Zionism as a form of Jewish nationalism in Europe acquired colonial aspirations (Piterberg 2008). Although there were other Jewish people living in Palestine before the emergence of Zionism, World War II led to a majority European Jewish population seeking refuge in the Holy Land, and many of those European Jews reproduced there, under the aegis of the British Empire, the classical forms of European settler colonialism. Palestinian and other Arab Jews, who once enjoyed certain rights when the Ottomans controlled Palestine (Greber 2006), were often opposed to the British Imperial occupation of Palestine and to many European Jews' Zionist aims of forming a Jewish-only nation-state in Palestine (Hart 2007a).

The Zionist project of forming a Jewish state was formulated by European Jews who had considered even Uganda at the Sixth Zionist Congress (1903), led in Basel, Switzerland, as a site for the Jewish Nation State. These ideas were formed during a period of high colonialism in the European nations, especially with regard to Africa and Asia, since conditions were no longer favorable for expansion into the Americas (North and South) because of the postcolonies and difficulties of maintaining the remaining colonies there. This view of state formation through colonization carried through to the process that unfolded at the end of World War II, which amounted to the effort to form a European settlement for Jews in the Middle East (Masalha 2005; Hart 2007a; Piterberg 2008).

Exacerbating the colonial dimension of the situation was that many of the European Jews involved in this process were, prior to the Holocaust, groups of Jews who regarded themselves as cosmopolitan and assimilating Europeans to the West versus the Oriental and less modern groups of Jews to the East. The Holocaust had fused these conflicting populations of Jews into a singular identity suffering from common persecution. Although seeing themselves as returning to the Holy Land, they did not see themselves as commonly linked to the people, including other Jews, who were already there.

The term that was created after 1948 to identify Jews of the Middle East was "Jews from Arab lands." There seemed to be a very careful elision of Jews from the Arabic cultural system that was marked by a strong political bias. Arabs had now become the enemy par excellence of the Jewish State, which was now seen as the sole legitimate representative body of the Jewish people. With the traditional antipathy of the Ashkenazi Jews—and it should be remembered that Ashkenazi Jews dominated the Zionist movement and had once even considered making Yiddish the national language of Israel—toward the classical Sephardic culture in place, the adoption of a new anti-Gentile animus toward the Arabs similar to that sense of exclusion that had animated Ashkenazi culture for many centuries, caused the Arab nature of Jewish identification to find itself singled out for extinction. Practices of separation followed, and for non-Jews already living in the territory, what followed was what a new generation of Israeli historians describes as "ethnic cleansing" (Pappé 2007). Paraphrasing Aimé Césaire's *Discourse on Colonialism* (2001), Hitlerism as a continuation of colonial racist ideology came back to haunt Palestinians this time at the hands of groups of European Jews who ironically were escaping from the Nazi Holocaust. The settler project was ironically also

“Semitic anti-Semitic” ideology. The Jewish state formed in 1948 justified and continues to justify its existence on the basis of being a refuge for Jews (Hart 2007a; Kovel 2007)—inaugurating many Jews to make *aliyah*, migrating to Israel, and in some cases escaping from horrific conditions under “anti-Jewish anti-Semitism” not only in Europe but also in some countries of East Africa and Western Asia—while Arab-Jews, in addition to Sephardic Jews from Asia, and East African (mostly Ethiopian) Jews suffered and continue to suffer from racist discrimination by European Jews who controlled and continue to control most of the apparatuses of the new state. Thus, although the formation of the Jewish state in 1948 led to the forced expulsion and displacement of most Palestinians from their land (Masalha 2005; Pappé 2007), Palestinian Jews and many other Arab Jews faced a peculiar development in this process. As David Sasha (2008) explains:

It is for this reason that the only Jewry that has been forced to remove its adjectival prefix is that of Arab Jewry. There is no other Jewry that is called “Jews from such-and-such lands.”

This move for extinction from within reflected a policy toward many of those outside. Similar to the North American settler colonialism against Native Americans in the formation of the United States, Israeli elites, who were mostly comprised of European Jews, violated nearly every treaty and kept over the last 60 years a policy of systematic, forced displacement of Palestinians from the land—which they argued did not belong to them but to the British to give as a territorial possession gained from the collapse of the Ottomans—and settlement of Jewish colonies in these territories (Masalha 1992; Hart 2007b; Pappé 2007).

The “remarkable explicit Jewish-Christian [combination] in political terms”

(Wallerstein 2008:31) in the last couple of decades can only be understood in the context of a gradual incorporation of European Jews as “whites” in most Western metropolitan centers after the Second World War (Brodkin 2000). In addition, the concurrent use of Israel as a Western pro-imperialist military bastion in the Middle East (Chomsky 1999)—especially because of its proximity to strategic sites of oil reserves in a world needing fuel for further development of competing markets—led to a straight-jacketing of Israel’s identity as more Western than part of the North African and West Asian worlds. The colonial project in Israel can therefore not be separated from US hegemony and global white supremacy. Over time a triple global alliance was built between white European and white Euro-American elites with Euro-American and European Jewish pro-Zionist elites in the West and European and Euro-American Jewish settlers in Palestine. Western blessings to Israel legitimated, financed, and made possible Israeli settler colonialism in Palestine (cf. Petras 2006).

Israel and Global Anti-Semitism

It is irresponsible to discuss anti-Semitism today without taking into account the transformation of European Jews from racialized subjects of color into “whites” in both Western Europe and North America and without the transformation of Palestine into a Jewish settler state (Christison & Christison 2006:116). With the incorporation of European Jews as white there is an important reduction of anti-Semitism only into “anti-Jewish anti-Semitism” in the West. By contrast, other forms of anti-Semitism such as “anti-Arab/Muslim anti-Semitism” and “anti-Afro-Arab/Muslim anti-Semitism” are part of ordinary common sense and are strong in the West (cf. El-Tayeb 2008). The recent incorporation of European Jews and Euro-American Jews into whiteness has important consequences

captured in the following statement by Religious Studies scholar Carl W. Ernst:

Europe and America have done a dramatic about-face with respect to Judaism over the course of the past century. Although anti-Semitism was common and even fashionable early in the twentieth century, the horrors of the Holocaust and the establishment of the state of Israel changed that. While anti-Semitism still lingers among certain hate groups, there are plenty of defenders of Judaism on the alert against them. Christianity, of course, remains the majority religious category in most of Europe and America, and it is not in any real danger. Among major religious groups, there remains Islam, with a complex of media images that is almost uniformly negative. How did this negative representation come to be, and what is its relationship with the actuality of Muslims past and future?

The question of anti-Muslim stereotypes looms especially large today in terms of sheer numbers. No respectable authorities defend anti-Semitism anymore, and there is a widespread consensus that insulting statements and stereotypes about Jews are both factually incorrect and morally reprehensible, whether in reference to physical appearance or behavior. Yet, at the same time, it is commonly accepted among educated people that Islam is a religion that by definition oppresses women and encourages violence. (Ernst 2003:11–12)

Neo-conservative elites in the US and Western Europe (Taguieff 2002; Iganski 2003), take “Judeophobia” and “anti-Jew-

ish anti-Semitism” as the hegemonic forms of racism in the West today, often in order to blame, in a perverse way, Arabs and Muslims and to hide the hegemonic forms of white racism, which are mostly “anti-black racism” (globally) and “anti-Arab/Muslim anti-Semitism.” (We point to the global aspects of anti-black racism because, unfortunately, anti-black racism is also a reality in Arab Muslim governed societies, including those in North Africa.) Given Arabs’/Muslims’ critical views of Israel and the Israeli state, associating critiques of the Zionist state with anti-Semitism, white racist elites in Europe and North America developed a strategy of “bad faith” (Gordon 1995) where the main victims of racism today are accused of being the major perpetrators of racism. Two recent examples were the readiness of the American right to call Justice Sonia Sotomayor “racist” because of her claims of bringing her life experience as a Puerto Rican woman to the American judicial system and their comparison of President Barack Obama with Hitler in their objections to publicly supported national health care.

The misrepresentation of Jewish people as a white people, albeit with protest from many Jews, including some European Jews who insist that they are not white, has led to a perverse form of accusation of anti-Semitism premised upon global denunciation of the role of Israel in Middle Eastern politics and its impact on the rest of the world. A pariah status has emerged for Palestinians living in the Holy Land, which has garnered protest across the globe. Although similar protest is made by Jewish people in Israel, their efforts are pushed to the wayside by elites in charge of the Israeli state and their supporters in the United States who accuse all criticisms of Zionism or policies of the Israeli government as equivalent to anti-Semitism (Balibar, Brauman, Butler, and Hazan 2003; Finkelstien 2008). This instrumentalist argument distorts real situations of anti-Semitism and

reduces the credibility of anti-Semitic discourse worldwide (ibid.). The charge confuses criticisms of a state's policies with those against its population. The matter is complicated by Israel being a nation-state, but that could apply as well to the many nation-states in the Arab world. Leaders have tried in those countries to make criticisms of their states equivalent to anti-Arab criticism or anti-Arab anti-Semitism, but the current political climate enables the fallacy of this view to be seen more clearly than in the case of the state of Israel. What makes these cases vulnerable to this tactic, however, is that there are instances of anti-Israel criticism also being made by "anti-Jewish anti-Semitic" people and there are instances of anti-Saudi Arabia, anti-Iranian, and anti-Pakistan criticism taking the form of anti-Arab anti-Semitism, although the last two are not primarily Arab peoples.

If we understand anti-Arab racism as a form of anti-Semitism, the main contemporary ideologues of this "Semitic anti-Semitism" are many pro-Zionist intellectuals, both Israeli and non-Israeli (Masalha 2007; Spector 2008; Finkelstein 2008). It should therefore not come as a surprise that anti-Muslim rhetoric focuses not only on "Arabs in the Arab world" but also on Muslims in the "West" under the stereotype of "terrorist-prone people" (Said 1981; Gottschalk and Greenberg 2008). Some Islamophobic scholars, such as Raphael Israeli (2008), evoking the third Muslim invasion of Europe, depict Muslim minorities, as opposed to other immigrants, as inherently dangerous and intent on turning non-Muslim populations into second- and third-class citizens in their own countries. This hyperbolic rhetoric and preempting of critical discussions of a state versus a people have created a situation where real expressions of "anti-Jewish anti-Semitism" have become banal and where old forms of "anti-Jewish anti-Semitism" are being recycled to describe atrocities of the Israeli state. For example, slogans such as " Hamas, Hamas:

Jewish to the gas" in recent anti-Zionist demonstrations in Europe should be of concern to anti-colonial, anti-imperialist, and anti-racist movements.

Although it is true that many supporters of Israel reproduce racist and imperialist ideologies, we should like to stress here that it is not our position that all supporters of Israel's claim to be a refuge for Jews adhere to racist and imperialist policies. They, and all of us concerned with anti-Semitism in all of its varieties (such as "anti-Jewish anti-Semitism," "anti-Arab/Muslim anti-Semitism," and "anti-Afro-Arab/Muslim anti-Semitism"), should be concerned by the extent to which some anti-Israel discourses fall into "anti-Jewish anti-Semitism."

PART II: CONTEMPORARY ANTI-SEMITISM

We divided the collection of articles included in this volume in three main topics. The following are summaries of contributions to this volume:

Anti-Semitism: Past and Present

David Ost discusses anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe, examining the popular claim of a "new anti-Semitism" said to be presently manifesting itself. Contemporary Polish anti-Semitism is analyzed in order to demonstrate how Jews are often associated with capitalist modernity, rendering popular anti-Semitism more a symbol of non-elite disgruntlement than a real expression of animosity towards individuals or groups. In addition, he discusses the pervasive belief in the reality of virulent Polish anti-Semitism, a belief deeply ingrained among western Jews with ancestors from Poland, and criticizes this as an example of an unfair anti-Polonism that is itself partly responsible for perpetuating anti-Semitism.

James Cohen dissects anti-Semitism brandished as a charge against real or alleged offenders, an approach he considers indispensable to understanding how the notion of anti-Semitism operates in political discourse and action. He analyzes in detail the accusation of anti-Semitism in cases where it can be shown that the targeted behavior is at least in part imaginary and constructed. According to Cohen, the effectiveness of this ascribed anti-Semitism depends on the ability of those who construct it to denounce it and make it *appear* plausible by connecting it with tangible anti-Semitic acts or declarations. Providing recent French examples, Cohen suggests anti-Semitism is constructed in an essentializing and a-historical manner, lumping together disparate groups and individuals into a supposed milieu or nebulous collective, sometimes portrayed in conspiratorial terms.

Santiago Slabodsky utilizes the Frankfurt School's analysis of anti-Semitism to demonstrate the need to go beyond the vicious circles of the current academic debate by including the interplay between the center and periphery regarding the imperial role of the Jew. Tracing the latter over a period of five hundred years, Slabodsky reevaluates typologies of anti-Semitism and points to the need to read post-1945/48 decolonial anti-Semitism as a confrontation with the colonial legacy that universalizes otherness through the Jewish experience. By tracing the renewal of this construction in the debate between radical Jews and decolonizers, Slabodsky concludes that this role of the Jew is as important for current Jewish identity as its disruption is necessary for de-colonizers.

Rabson Wuriga explores European voices (Linneaus, Blumenbach, Hegel) that influenced attitudes and policies on race and anti-Semitism during the 18th-20th centuries. He highlights some of the major developments such as scientific racism, 'rights of man,' and others as movements

that either aided or gave expression to European anti-Semitism. In his contribution, Wuriga puts forth the proposition that the idea of new anti-Semitism is another phase of anti-Semitism—only one that targets the Jewish State of Israel. Wuriga suggests, first, that the European intellectual community played a major role in aiding the anti-Semitic conception of Jews as Jews; secondly, he notes that European Jews were imbibed into European racial fantasies and ended up committing Semitic anti-Semitism and/or racism.

Walter Mignolo discusses how racial formations in colonialism and imperialism have to be understood in the context of the simultaneous transformation of Christianity and the emergence of the capitalist world economy. In his contribution he focuses on how Christian theology prepared the terrain for two complementary articulations of racism. One was founded on Christian epistemic privilege over the two major competing religions (Jews and Muslims), the other on a secularization of theological detachment culminating in the "purity of blood" that became the biological and natural marker (Indians, Blacks, Mestizos, Mulatos) of what used to be the marker of religious belief (Jews, Moors, Conversos, Moriscos). Mignolo also discusses the emergence of secular "Jewness" in eighteenth century Europe and how these developments were concurrent with Western Imperialism in the New World. He concludes that secular Jewness joined secular Euro-American economic practices (e.g., imperial capitalism) and the construction of the State of Israel by what Marc Ellis describes as "Constantine Jews."

Ramon Grosfoguel discusses the consequences of the latest Israeli massacres in Gaza in relation to its global consequences toward Human Rights and global Anti-Semitism today. He explores Human Rights in the 20th century in relation to Rights of People in the 16th century and Rights of Man in the 18th century. More-

over, he develops a discussion about Fundamentalism in the world today, in particular on the hegemonic, silent and pervasive form of fundamentalism: Eurocentric fundamentalism.

Jewishness, Anti-Semitism, and Identity

For Marc Ellis, anti-Semitism is a consequence of the historical collusion between Western (neo)liberalism and secular capitalism, supported by Christianity and Constantine Jews. In his contribution he raises provocative questions about Jewish identity, the Holocaust, and the increasingly perilous situation in the Middle East. Ellis uses the categories of a Constantinian Jewish establishment, Progressive Jews, and Jews of Conscience and respectively links them with neo-conservative, liberal/left of center and radical perspectives. For Ellis, Constantinian Jewish life revolves around the Holocaust and Israel as central to Jewish life, adopting neo-conservative politics of remembrance and empowerment; Progressive Jews, while affirming the Holocaust and Israel as central to Jewish life, see the Israeli occupation of Palestine as a blight on Jewish innocence and purpose, supporting a two-state solution as a way forward for the Jewish people; and Jews of Conscience see the twinning of the Holocaust and Israel in power over others as a deformation of Jewish life and character that can only be addressed through a radical evaluation of the uses of Jewish power in the United States and Israel.

Etienne Balibar's intervention centres on an insightful and critical analysis of three recent works on Zionism: Jacqueline Rose's *The Question of Zion*, which interprets the historical trajectory of Zionism and examines the messianic foundations of political Zionism; Idith Zertal's *La nation et la mort: La Shoah dans le discours et la politique d'Israël*, and its study of the way in which a set of commemorations and educational in-

stitutions constructed and incorporated the notion of a "crucial and exclusive link" between the memory of the Shoah and Israeli defense policy; and Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin's *Exil et souveraineté: Judaïsme, sionisme et pensée bi-nationale*, which addresses bi-national thought and the degree to which it constitutes both an "intellectual and moral reform" and a political methodology in the current pervasive presence of anti-Semitism and the profundity of the deferred effects that its internalization constantly produces in the self-consciousness or *Selbstthematisierung* indissociable from the Israeli national construction.

Ivan Davidson Kalmar explores anti-Semitism as one aspect of the long history of a joint construction of Jewish and Muslim identities, and raises fundamentally important and provocative questions about how, in more recent times, the commonality between Jew and Arab, which the term "anti-Semitism" displays unambiguously, could have ever become what he calls a "secret." Drawing on Edward Said and referring to Mel Gibson's film "The Passion of the Christ" as well as Hegel, he argues that from the 18th century to September 11, 2001, the nature of contemporary Muslim anti-Semitism betrays a clear debt to traditional, western anti-Semitic stereotypes and hate literature.

Anti-Semitism and Literature

Martine Chard-Hutchinson provides an analysis of Philip Roth's *The Plot against America* and focuses on the depiction of anti-Semitic riots in America on Monday, October 12, 1942, said to provide "counter-historical" context for the novel while providing clues as to its narrative, some of its key issues like "the eternal Antisemitism," and even its title "the Jewish conspirational plot against America." Chard-Hutchinson looks at how Roth references the riots but also contextualizes Henry Ford, America First, southern Democrats, isolationist Re-

publicans, and major figures such as Lindbergh, to carefully scrutinize the depiction of anti-Semitism in this major literary work.

Michael Löwy focuses on Franz Kafka's *Trial*, which conveys Kafka's rebel Jewish consciousness, combining compassion for the victim and a critique of its voluntary servitude. Löwy claims that it is not in an imaginary future but in contemporary historical events that one should look for the source of inspiration for *The Trial*. Among these facts were the great anti-Semitic trials of his time, all examples of state injustice: the Tisza trial (Hungary 1882), the Dreyfus trial (France 1894-1899), the Hilsner trial (Czechoslovakia, 1899-1900) and the Beiliss trial (Russia, 1912-13). In spite of the differences between the various State regimes—absolutist, constitutional monarchy, republic—the judicial system condemned, sometimes to death, innocent victims whose only crime was to be Jewish.

Finally Jean-Paul Rocchi offers a joint exploration of racism and anti-Semitism in a textual dialogue between Baldwin and Freud. Rocchi argues that the imprint left by nineteenth and early twentieth century racial metaphors on the Freudian construction of gender and sexuality has reproduced the logic of racial differentiation within psychoanalysis, which can be seen in the mutual exclusion of identification and desire and the role played by unconscious fantasies. Rocchi asserts that as a modern theory of subjectivity based on sex and sexual difference, psychoanalysis has been strongly influenced by the cultural, scientific and religious constructions of race. At the same time, the binary logic of gender and sexuality in psychoanalysis delineates the space where a seemingly self-assertive white consciousness emerges.

In all, the articles gathered here do not represent a unified voice but those often unheard in discussions of anti-Semitism. It is our hope that bringing them together will

offer the readers of *Human Architecture* a nuanced understanding of this persistent aberration.

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