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From Assimilationist Antiracism to Zionist Anti-antisemitism

Georg Simmel, Franz Boas, and Arthur Ruppin

AMOS MORRIS-REICH

This essay delineates three responses to antisemitism by social scientists of Jewish descent: Georg Simmel (1858–1918), one of the founders of academic sociology; Franz Boas (1858–1942), the founder of American cultural anthropology; and Arthur Ruppin (1876–1943), the founder of Jewish sociology and demography. Simmel and Boas were both staunch supporters of Jewish assimilation; Ruppin, a prominent Zionist leader, was an opponent of assimilation. All three thinkers recognized the reality of modern antisemitism and viewed it as a set of cognitive and social practices that were irreducible to Christian animosity toward Jews. Their responses to antisemitism diverge, though, with regard to the epistemic and ontological status of antisemitism and regarding the question of what should be done about it. My principal proposition in this chapter is that the reactions of these three thinkers were shaped by a generational difference, namely whether they had grown up in a historical context when the ideal of assimilation was still intact, as did Simmel and Boas, or in a somewhat later context when this ideal had already been destroyed by the renewed antisemitism of the 1870s, as was the case with Ruppin. Continuing allegiance to assimilation made it difficult for the two representatives of the older generation directly to challenge antisemitism, whereas the replacement of this ideal by Zionism made it easier to do so for the younger Ruppin; however, the assimilationist perspective prompted the former two to develop social science perspectives that were designed to be more or less immune to race thinking, whereas the

anti-assimilationist perspective was capable of accommodating a certain conception of race.

Simmel, Boas, and Ruppin were at one stage or another objects of direct antisemitism. Simmel's academic career was impeded by antisemitic sentiments within the German academy.[1] In 1908 an antisemitic letter by Dietrich Schäffer effectively blocked Simmel's appointment to a professorship in the Philosophy Faculty at Heidelberg University. Boas was the subject of antisemitic insults from his childhood in Minden, throughout his student years in Berlin and Kiel, and after he moved to the United States, within the academic milieu. Boas arrived in the United States in 1887 with visible scars on his face, the result of duels that he had initiated in defense of his honor against antisemitic insults. In his childhood home in Magdeburg, Ruppin suffered from antisemitic insults from his schoolmates.[2] In his diary Ruppin monitored with great sensitivity changes in the social antisemitism he encountered. Countering antisemitism as well as collecting statistics on contemporary Jewry was clearly at the root of his establishing the Berliner Büro für jüdische Statistik und Demographie.

A wave of antisemitism swept German society in the 1870s. This wave peaked in the Berlin antisemitism dispute of 1879–80. In modern antisemitism, Christian, secular, and anti-Christian ideas and images, racial categories, and the politics of the newly united Germany were intimately mixed. Antisemitism became a social and cultural phenomenon so widely spread that it could not be avoided, a fact that affected individual Germans, both Jewish and Gentile. Simmel and Boas encountered the antisemitic wave of the 1870s as young men, when they were already deeply committed to ideas of integration and assimilation. Ruppin, however, grew up in a society marked by the presence of social and intellectual antisemitism from a much earlier age. Simmel and Boas chose an indirect strategy of response to antisemitism, whereas Ruppin responded to it directly.

Their specific forms of response cannot be understood without reference to the role of race in the development of anthropology and sociology as disciplines. As academic disciplines in German universities, sociology and anthropology are both developments of the latter half of the nineteenth century. Both sociology and anthropology were greatly influenced by similar conceptual tendencies such as Spencer's theory of differentiation and Darwin's theory of evolution. Concepts of race,

however, developed differently in each discipline. In the German case, anthropology was conceptually, if not always empirically, differentiated from *Ethnologie*, *Volkskunde*, and *Völkerkunde* and referred to the natural scientific study of man and the species' biological history. *Anthropologie* (physical anthropology) almost inherently entailed concepts of race—in the plural, though, as concepts of race ranged from racial determinism to race as at least in part a social construct. Leaving aside the complex question of whether a discipline based on notions of race is inherently racist or not, it should be noted that in Germany up until the turn of the twentieth century anthropology was led by politically liberal luminaries such as Rudolf Virchow, who viewed themselves, and were viewed by their environment, as staunchly antiracist and anti-antisemitic. Virchow was a vocal opponent of political antisemitism. In retrospect, however, his anthropological surveys of German schoolchildren were more ambiguous and may have inadvertently contributed to the antisemitic racialization of Jews.[3]

In German sociology by the end of the nineteenth century, the status of biology in general and of race in particular was fiercely disputed. This controversy had appeared and had already been resolved on the institutional level before World War I. With the support of the most prominent members of the guild, including Ferdinand Tönnies, Max Weber, and Simmel, race, at least officially, was expelled from the sociological discipline.[4]

Furthermore it is important to keep in mind that the genealogy of antisemitism is different from that of race, and, while historically related, the two should be clearly distinguished. Key antisemites of the period, including Richard Wagner and Wilhelm Marr, were not primarily preoccupied with the concept of race, whereas prominent figures in the genealogy of racism such as Count Joseph Gobineau, Ernst Haeckel, Francis Galton, and William Ripley viewed Jews as racially inferior but were much more focused on race as a general organizing principle. While race and antisemitism are historically entangled in this period, their interplay allowed appropriation or rejection of both, as well as the possibility of rejecting one and adopting the other.

Anti-Jewish themes and stereotypes played a complex role in social science of the period. Even a socially influenced person such as Gustav Schmoller, a monarchist historian of economics who greatly influenced the development of sociology and who had published the works

of Jewish authors (including an early essay by Simmel) in the yearbook he edited, expressed anti-Jewish ideas. Wilhelm Dilthey, to take another prominent example, developed a strictly individualist notion of the *Geisteswissenschaften* that excluded "race." While Dilthey impeded Simmel's appointment in Berlin University, he was not viewed as antisemitic and in fact supported several Jewish scholars. His historical account of Germany, however, emphasized the central role of the Church and the army, a common perception of Germany that not only excluded Jews but was also closely associated with antisemitic views. Equally complex is Weber's case. His sociological work could hardly be seen as antisemitic. Weber, as is well known, supported Simmel's (failed) appointment at Heidelberg University and was known to be a supporter of Jewish students. But comments made in *Economy and Society* and his conception of "Jewish rationalism" nonetheless reconnected with contemporary antisemitic themes or stereotypes.[5]

In the history of the social sciences there existed also direct links between antisemitic ideology and specific branches of knowledge. The Americans William Ripley and Madison Grant relied on racialist concepts that represented Jews as inferior, expressing explicitly antisemitic arguments and images. Grant also established the Galton Society in 1918 as an antisemitic alternative to the American Anthropological Association, after Boas was elected as its president.[6] Ernst Haeckel's stance with regard to Jews and antisemitism has been a matter of much historical debate.[7] Yet it is clear that his philosophical-anthropological theoretical framework played a key role in the generation of racist antisemitic literature.

Albeit employing different strategies, Simmel's and Boas's responses to antisemitism are closely tied to their repudiation of principles of fundamental racial difference. In contrast, certain other scholars of Jewish descent rejected antisemitic claims but did not reject racial categories as such. This is demonstrated in Ignaz Zollschan's *Das Rassenproblem*, which appeared in Vienna in 1912, and in Ludwik Gumplowicz's earlier *Der Rassenkampf*.[8] Authors of Jewish background responded to antisemitism differently and according to their dissimilar conceptual presuppositions. Significantly, therefore, the different biographical, intellectual, and institutional aspects do not necessarily coincide. In this multifaceted and complex historical context, which includes personal, intellectual, and institutional aspects, we must place Simmel, Boas, and Ruppin.

The generation of German Jews born in the 1850s and early 1860s obtained their entire schooling in the German educational system. The German language was its principal and often sole language, and, as a rule, this generation was deeply committed not only to German culture and values but to the idea of Jewish integration into German society and culture. Antisemitic ideas were not disseminated solely by writers of pamphlets, ideologues, and politicians,[9] but after the renowned historian Heinrich von Treitschke legitimized the term *antisemitism* in his 1879 article "Our Prospects," even to liberal Jews who had admired Treitschke for his liberal nationalism it became clear that intellectual antisemitism had become established and could no longer be disregarded. But members of this generation were faced with a dilemma: a direct response to antisemitism undermined their own commitment to assimilation by calling it into question. Indeed many Jews of this generation responded only indirectly to antisemitism. In contrast, a younger generation that had matured in a society marked by antisemitism experienced rejection by large segments of German society. This younger generation was sometimes better equipped to respond candidly to antisemitism. The paradox, however, exemplified in the case of Ruppin, is that such direct responses were often interlocked with racial concepts. They were grounded in biological categories and impinged on the antisemitic categories that were becoming increasingly prevalent in branches of German social science, particularly within anthropology after 1900. Responses to antisemitism were balanced between ideas of Jewish separation at one ideological end, mainly associated with the Zionist idea, and ideas that focused on the transformation of German society at large, tied to socialist or Marxist universalistic ideologies. This generational dimension is important for the comparative analysis.

Georg Simmel: A Methodology Immune to Race Thinking

Simmel never referred to antisemitism as a circumscribed social phenomenon or even employed the word *antisemitism* in his publications. This does not reflect lack of interest on Simmel's behalf, or his failure to notice the existence of antisemitism in German society, but rather is a sign that he viewed it as particularly sensitive matter that necessitated great caution.[10] Simmel supported Jewish integration into German society and culture and, as Köhnke has observed, viewed any public allusion

to antisemitism by individuals of Jewish descent as a potential obstacle to that integration. Substantiation for this interpretation can be found in the fact that in his private correspondences Simmel refers more than once to antisemitism in Germany and Austria.[11]

Simmel's response to antisemitism can be examined through separate but interconnected perspectives, ranging from general epistemic considerations to more specific allusions to race or Jews. He does not deny the reality of markers of Jewish difference but, based on a specific set of sociological principles, attempts to undermine the antisemitic claim that these markers are biologically innate or racially determined. But his strategy is to circumvent the definition of antisemitism as a separate object or set of social interactions with distinctive characteristics. This can be demonstrated through the way theoretical presuppositions condition references to Jews or to racial difference.

Throughout his career Simmel created an elaborate sociological theory that circumvented and made redundant the category of race, its imagery and markers. Two of his central sociological notions—"social form" and "social type"—directly impinge on the interpretation of Jewish difference. Specifically these notions transform differences commonly conceived as racial into socially constituted differences.

Simmel developed the notions of social form and social type from the bottom up, in terms of individual "interaction." In his choice he was well aware that the principal alternative to interaction throughout the history of philosophy and in contemporary physics was "substance." His insistence that social forms and social types were the result of individual interaction undermined common conceptions of society and culture as preexisting entities, deriving directly from "nature," "Volk," or "race."

The history of the notion of social form, which Simmel developed in his early monograph *On Social Differentiation* (1881–82), demonstrates the composite history of antisemitism in German social science, which involves the delicate interrelationship between conceptual and biographical considerations.[12] Social form was in fact a reformulation of Simmel's German Jewish teacher Moritz Lazarus's notion of *Verdichtung*, or condensation, which Lazarus viewed as the foundation of collective psychology. Lazarus, however, came under the attack of Dilthey, who rejected Lazarus's concepts as based on a collectivistic epistemology. To comply with neo-Kantian individualist epistemology, as well as to withstand Dilthey's

criticism, Simmel reframed Lazarus's Verdichtung as a social form on the strictly individualist grounds of individual interaction. Social forms are the result of gradual solidification of individual interactions into stable, persisting forms. Such forms gain an "existence," according to Simmel, and a certain amount of coercive power, though they do not exist in the ontological sense. Yet individuals in any society confront social forms in their daily lives and must grapple with them in order to achieve their individual intentions or goals.

Social form is at the core of Simmel's sociological theory. Simmel employed the notion of individual interaction throughout his career and, as shown by David Frisby, made use of interaction to gradually radicalize his definition of society. In fact in his later work he made interaction between individuals the sole criterion for the existence of society.[13] Any social form therefore is secondary and results from individual interaction. The antisemitic view that Jews are racially different from and inferior to non-Jews was, to follow Simmel's definitions, a social form, an example of the solidification of individual social and cognitive practices into forms that gained a certain "life" or "existence" of their own. Significantly such an interpretation does not necessarily deny the existence of individual differences or differences between groups; it places them, however, in a strictly individualist sociological framework.

Simmel's later notion of social type runs parallel to his idea of social form in certain respects. In contrast to social form, however, which aims for the solidification of relations, social type seeks to account for individual identities. Simmel develops this notion in his programmatic essay "How Is Society Possible?" and employs it for the analysis of numerous such types. The notion of social type is developed through the discussion of three "sociological apriorities." The first principle is that the picture of another person is distorted in principle.[14] This is because every person has a core of individuality that cannot be subjectively reproduced by another. As a result, we think of the individual with his or her singularity under universal categories. In order to recognize that individual, we subsume him or her under a general type.

This sociological a priori principle is closely connected to an additional consideration, namely that the other person is never "entirely himself" but only a fragment of himself. Yet humans cannot grasp fragments, only wholes. As a result, the other man is typed according to the idealization

of his personality from given fragments. Simmel's second sociological a priori consideration is that "each element of a group is not a societary part, but beyond that something else." This "constitutes the positive condition for the fact that he is such a group member in other aspects of his being." Simmel's third principle is that "society is a structure of unequal elements," but the possibility of belonging to a society rests on the *assumption* that each individual "is automatically referred to a determined position within his social milieu, that this position ideally belonging to him is also actually present in the social whole."[15] Particular social types are conceived as cast by the specifiable reactions and expectations of others. Yet the latter a priori principles deny the possibility of complete identity between individual and type and between individual and social role.

These sociological principles are at the root of Simmel's entire sociological work, but they also form a response to antisemitism. Simmel maintains that the creation of social types rests on an intimate dialectics between individuals and others. Types therefore are to a great extent "negative," that is, imposed from without, by way of interaction. The relations are with others who assign an individual a particular position and expect him to behave in specific ways. Furthermore this is not entirely an individual matter in the sense that his characteristics are seen as attributes of the social structure. The gist of this interpretation is that an individual assigned to a certain type, be it that of the poor, the whore, the stranger, or any other, has his individual features completed into more general categories of types. In other words, types are socially mediated categories rather than naturally classified differences. Simmel, however, discusses only individual differences and categories he conceives as universal, avoiding the intermediate case of "specific differences," including racial difference. He does not deny the reality of differences but rather subjects them to a strictly individualistic analytical framework. Simmel discusses Jews, as we will see shortly, in terms of the type of the stranger. But, based on the above principles, the very category of the Jew lends itself to analysis as a social type. Jews are individual humans who are classified as "Jews" following the sociological a priori principles elucidated above.

Both social form and social type establish the sociological method on methodological and ontological individualism and view social relations and social identities in individual terms. While Simmel's motivations

cannot be reduced to countering antisemitism, these principles clearly contest biological, racial, and historical collectivistic accounts of Jews, Jewish difference, and antisemitic sentiments or social forms.

Simmel's few references to Jews or Jewish difference, when read within the theoretical framework elucidated above, read as part of a strategy to undermine antisemitic representations of Jews. I will illustrate Simmel's strategy of sociologically explaining Jewish difference through two references he makes to the Jews in "The Stranger" and "The Sociology of the Senses."

Simmel was very restrained in his allusions to race. "The Sociology of the Senses," which appeared as an *Exkurs* in the 1908 *Soziologie*, is one of the few places in which he relates to this topic. In this text he alludes to the Jews in a carefully constructed discussion of the sociology of the senses. Simmel analyzes the effect of differences conceived as being racial. He confronts racial differences through a discussion of the sense of smell, presenting it as the lowest and most primitive of the senses. The sense of smell stands in complete opposition to the higher faculties of thought and volition. Furthermore he does not refer to the smell of people but to the smells arising from the environment, which adhere to people.[16] Simmel gives three examples of this phenomenon:

> The reception of the Negro in higher social circles of North America is out of the question by reason of the body odour of the Negro, and the mutual dark aversion between Germanic people [*Germanen*] and Jews has been ascribed to the same cause. Personal contact between educated people and workers often so vigorously advocated for the social development of the present, the *rapprochement* of the two worlds of which the one does not know how the other lives also advocated by the educated classes as an ethical ideal, fails simply because of the insuperability of impressions of smell.[17]

In this passage Simmel juxtaposes three pairs, bringing together social and racial frames of reference: black and high-class North Americans; Jews and Germanic peoples; the proletarian class and the educated. Based on his individualist framework, both "races" as well as "classes" are secondary social constructs. Yet Simmel stages the three pairs in a specific way that implicitly undermines the racist asymmetries underlying these

pairs of oppositions. In the American example, for instance, the aversion implied is the aversion of *white* people to Negroes' smell. Simmel, however, speaks only of the "higher social circles of North America" rather than referring to race characteristics. Even in the only pair in which both sides of the opposition are explicitly stated in racial terms, he translates the racial antagonism into terms of class. Through this replacement he implies that the German-Jewish example could also be translated into socially mediated rather than racial frames of reference. Simmel casts racial differences as social constructs, thereby undermining the claim that the difference is natural, inherent, permanent, and unalterable.[18]

Simmel's most famous allusion to Jews is in his Exkurs on the stranger. Different commentators have observed that Simmel's description of the stranger greatly resembles descriptions of Jews.[19] In this text there are two important aspects that are often overlooked. The first aspect I wish to emphasize is that Simmel's stranger, as noted by Otthein Rammstedt, is identifiable by a specific form of interaction. That is, it is cast in sociological categories of individual interaction. The second point is that a close reading of his description reveals that Simmel does not deny the reality of Jewish difference: "[The stranger's] position within [society] is fundamentally affected by the fact that he does not belong in it initially and that he brings qualities into it that are not, and cannot be, indigenous to it."[20] Simmel does not deny the reality of Jewish difference, but the coordinates of his sociological method render Jewish difference and antisemitic sentiments secondary social constructions.

Simmel's sociological theory postulates that social forms are constituted through the gradual solidification of individual interactions. This theory implies that both markers of Jewish difference or identity as well as antisemitic sentiments are ultimately secondary results of individual interactions. Simmel's social theory offers itself as an alternative to theories of society grounded on collectivistic categories in general and to racial categories in particular. His radical epistemological individualism attempts to rule out, in practice if not in theory, the possibility that individual essence can be racially determined.

Simmel's rhetorical strategy is that of circumvention, that is, dealing with antisemitism without circumscribing it as a particular social phenomenon. His implicit interpretation of antisemitism, in this respect, opposed widespread late nineteenth-century views that antisemitism

was a natural or a biological phenomenon, constituting the racially determined asymmetric aversion of non-Jews toward Jews.

Franz Boas: Antisemitism as a Form of Prejudice

Boas was a student in Kiel, in northern Germany, when antisemitism became a recognized, institutionalized student movement. Letters to his parents testify to his firsthand encounter with antisemitism.[21]

Similarly to Simmel, Boas wrote voluminously, but only rarely on Jews. Also like Simmel, Boas's strategy was not to isolate antisemitism as a specific social phenomenon but rather to treat it within broader categories of human diversity and prejudice. Unlike Simmel, who attempted to free sociological discourse from racial categories altogether, Boas aimed not at eliminating race from anthropology but at changing its grounding and diminishing its significance. In particular he aimed at undermining deterministic notions of race from within a discourse that was founded on and permeated by "race." He gained his reputation as an anthropologist and scientist from within his anthropological discipline, a fact that endowed his alternative explanations with scientific authority.

Boas's writings address antisemitism on three different, interconnected but separate scientific registers. The first register can be found in his contributions to the field of physical anthropology, most notably his 1911 study of immigrants' children, the subtext of which was to contest political and scientific antisemitism.[22] The second is found in his articles that addressed antisemitism or racism directly. The third register is found in his works that systematically undermined racist scientific methodologies.

The status of race in Boas's earlier work is ambivalent, an ambivalence that is essential for understanding the trajectory of his career with regard to racism and, in a different way, to antisemitism as well. Boas's most important physical anthropological study directly combated antisemitism but was carried out, to a great extent, in racial categories. In the political context of a fierce controversy over the immigration of eastern European Jews and Asians to the United States, Boas studied changes in body form among children of immigrants in New York. Racial theory of the time viewed the skull as the most stable part of the body, racially determined, and least susceptible to change. Proponents of racial determinism used differences in cranial index to argue that differences between races are biological and innate. Opponents of immigration of Jews and

Asians to the United States viewed the inferiority of Jews and Asians as innate and opposed their admittance into the country on racial grounds.

Within this highly polemical context, Boas studied 17,821 individuals of seven ethnonational groups, including a large group of Jewish immigrants. He discovered that the average measures of cranial size of children born within ten years of their mother's arrival were significantly different from those of children born more than ten years after their mother's arrival. Boas did not deny that physical features were inherited but argued that over time the environment has an influence on these features. The unmistakable subtext of this study was the adaptability of populations conceived as racially inferior. The political implications of this study were immediate.[23]

Within the scientific community this study implied that differences between races were not immutable. The status of race in this study, however, is ambivalent. Its ambivalence stems from the fact that Boas chose to operate within a field immersed in race. In order to speak with scientific authority, he attempted to modify the meaning and extension of race rather than to reject it altogether.

The subject of some of Boas's work from the 1920s and 1930s is racist and antisemitic literature in both the United States and Europe. Two essays, published in 1923 and 1934 for a wide readership, directly counter racist, antisemitic, and Nordic racial theories: "Are the Jews a Race?" and "Aryans and Non-Aryans." In both essays Boas deconstructs claims of the existence of Jewish and Aryan races and racial types. He attempts to counter existing literature in which Jews are conceived as a race or a group with specific racial characteristics and argues that Jews are already deeply assimilated in their surroundings. He claims that they display a variety of types and that they were never, even in their pre-Diaspora past, racially homogeneous.

While Boas's essay discusses Jews, his goals transcend those of the "Jewish question." He tackles definitions of race: "Numerous attempts have been made to give a scientific status to the feeling of racial difference and particularly to the claim of Nordic superiority. . . . In none of these discussions, however, do we find a concise and definite answer to the question of what constitutes a race."[24] Rather than move deductively, from the general to the individual case of the Jews, Boas deconstructs racist accounts of Jews in order to discard antisemitic conceptions of race

as unscientific. The deconstruction of the Jews' case epitomizes his conception of race: "In practically every nation there is a mixture of different types that in some cases intermingle and scatter through the whole country."[25] Boas's argument concerning the Jews is backed by his perception that peoples are necessarily composed of various racial types and that one should not confuse peoples and racial types. In terms of the specific response to antisemitism, however, Boas, like Simmel, does not deny the existence of Jewish difference but rejects the meaning accorded to it by antisemitic writers. Even in his short article on Jews Boas does not lose sight of his wider anthropological and theoretical goals.

The most important aspect of Boas's response to antisemitism is found in his methodological criticism of racist anthropology. I will briefly exemplify this form of criticism with two cases from which one can learn about his form of argumentation.[26]

The essay "On Alternating Sounds" (1889) illustrates how Boas employed methodological grounds in order to counter racist anthropology. The article was a response to a paper presented a year earlier by the anthropologist and linguist Daniel Garrison Brinton. Brinton had observed that in the spoken languages of many Native Americans, certain sounds regularly alternated. Based on evolutionary theory, he interpreted this as a sign of linguistic inferiority, claiming that Native Americans were at a lower stage of evolution. In his response Boas argued that "alternating sounds" was not a feature of Native American languages but rather a reflection of the culturally determined nature of human perception. What Brinton conceived as alternating sounds did not reflect how the Inuit might pronounce a word but rather how one phonetic system (the English) was unable to accommodate another (the Inuit). Employing a form of neo-Kantian critique, Boas made a unique contribution to the methods of descriptive linguistics. Yet his ultimate goal was to show that the perceptual categories of Western researchers risked systematically misperceiving a meaningful element in another culture. What appeared to be evidence of cultural inferiority was in fact the consequence of unscientific methods and reflected Western beliefs as to their perceived superiority. This essay did not touch on antisemitism directly but bore on Jews, who in Europe were marked as primitive remnants of an inferior life form that inexplicably had survived into modern society.[27]

Boas was famous for his negative form of argumentation: rather than

making positive claims, he argued against the methods and empirical findings of the writers he opposed. In the first footnote to *Anthropology and Modern Life*, he lists the names of the most important American and German racist and antisemitic writers and then, in the body of the text, proceeds to systematically undermine each and every point of their methodological and epistemic underpinnings. He claims that the definitions of the racist theorists were weak and untenable and that their analyses were gross simplifications of complex empirical situations. He also questions their form of inductive procedure, which connects arbitrary phenomena that are in fact genetically disparate. Boas employs a radical form of realism in order to criticize their scientific realism and ultimately attacks the "Nordic Idea."[28] He argues against these racist and antisemitic writers by showing that reality does not conform to their definitions of "races," "racial types," or "racial traits."

Bringing these perspectives together, the "bigger picture" of Boas's response to antisemitism emerges. His major contribution was his "normalizing" of antisemitism. Aligning Jews with other minorities, he transformed antisemitism into a subcase of "racism" and "prejudice." This attempt has been so successful within branches of the social sciences that it goes almost unnoticed. Jews are objects of prejudice and hate not because Jews enjoy a special status in Western, Christian civilization or imagination, and certainly not because anything specifically "Jewish" triggers prejudice against them, but because of a human tendency to ostracize members of minority groups. Boas subordinated antisemitism to racism. He could achieve this only by ignoring those traits that were specific to antisemitism, such as the role of Christianity and the historical continuity of anti-Jewish sentiment. Recall that in his cultural and physical anthropology Boas systematically employed historical particularism to undermine comparative evolutionist accounts of culture and race. In ignoring the particular aspects of antisemitism, therefore, rhetorical and epistemic considerations were closely intertwined. The crux of Boas's response to antisemitism, in the end, was that there is nothing specifically anti-Jewish in antisemitism.

Arthur Ruppin: Antisemitism Is a Danger Not Devoid of Advantages

"Anti-Semitism cannot be overcome by opposing its arguments alone," Ruppin states in *The Sociology of the Jews*.[29] Unlike Simmel or Boas, Rup-

pin wrote extensively on antisemitism throughout his career, both in his diary and in his professional writings. Although his tools were universal, Ruppin declined to view antisemitism as part of some general social phenomenon. In contrast to Simmel and Boas, he viewed social scientific responses as a means not only to refute antisemitic notions of Jewish inferiority but also to enhance Jewish pride and self-esteem.[30]

We have much information about Ruppin's encounter with antisemitism because he addressed the topic in his diary from his youth in the 1890s onward. In Rawicz (a small town in what was then part of the German Reich, today Poland), where he spent his early years, a mixed city of Germans, Poles, and Jews, he professed that he had encountered no antisemitism. But in Magdeburg, a bigger German city to which the family later moved, Ruppin suffered from antisemitic insults from his schoolmates.[31] His diary entries have been said to "view Jews through an antisemitic lens."[32] In his youth there is evidence that Ruppin professed a strong aversion for his Jewish body, Jews in general, and in particular Jewish women. According to Yehoiakim Doron, he also expressed admiration for the blond Nordic body.

Ruppin's curiosity led him to acquire and read antisemitic literature. His immediate response to the Loewe and Dreyfus affairs, as well as to other accusations made against Jews, was harsh. He did not doubt the veracity of the allegations leveled against the Jews in question and hoped their punishment would be severe, as he believed that such individuals incriminated the Jewish collectivity. He connected antisemitism and class. He did not believe that antisemitism was aimed at all Jews; he believed it was aimed at rich Jews.[33] In contrast to Simmel and Boas, Ruppin's self-identification as a Jew was explicit and central to his identity. With the radicalization of antisemitism toward the end of the nineteenth century, Ruppin's views on the subject gradually transformed. Disapproving judgments of Jews, for instance, disappeared from his diary. Alarmed by what he termed the "snowball" of antisemitism in the 1890s, Ruppin referred to the possibility that the Jews would be expelled from Germany.[34] He became not only the target of antisemitic incidents but also their conscientious observer.[35] He never reflected on his early diary entries, but his later analyses can be read as reflexively attempting to explain them. The study of antisemitism became a cornerstone of his academic project, crucial to his model for the sociological and demographic study of

contemporary Jewry, from *Die Juden der Gegenwart* (1904) through *Soziologie der Juden* (1930), *The Jews in the Modern World* (1935) and *The Jewish Fate and Future* (1940), which was published after Germany had invaded Poland, with its huge Jewish population, and the outbreak of World War II. Ruppin's basic view of antisemitism as a permanent feature of European society, culture, and history strongly resembles views of slightly earlier proto-Zionist and Zionist leaders such as Moses Hess, Leon Pinsker, Max Nordau, Theodor Herzl, and Ahad Ha'am.[36] He does not refer to them as scientific authorities, however, but grounds his conviction on sociological arguments.

If we compare Ruppin's earliest Jewish study with his later work, crucial changes are evident in his response to antisemitism. *Die Juden der Gegenwart* (1904, revised edition 1911) centers on the dangers of assimilation to Jewish existence. The discussion of antisemitism is subject to that of assimilation, antisemitism viewed as an "insufficient obstacle" against assimilation.[37] A certain minimal amount of antisemitism, Ruppin is implying, is necessary for Jewish national survival.

Ruppin differentiates between political, social, and economic antisemitism, describes antisemitism in different countries, and identifies its origin in Germany. He then analyzes modern antisemitism as being closely connected to the legal emancipation of Jews, and he emphasizes the discrepancy their legal emancipation created between their legal and social situation. He suggests that contemporary antisemitism is aimed at the Jews' race rather than their religion. The idea that antisemitism is intent on "declassing" Jews (*Deklassierung*) becomes a touchstone of his interpretation, to which he returns in his later publications. A deep ambivalence is built into Ruppin's interpretation of antisemitism, which is present already in this early publication. Jews are trapped in modern societies between threats from opposite directions. Beyond a certain threshold, antisemitism is in itself a danger. However, social antisemitism alone cannot stand in the way of assimilation, which is an even more serious threat to Jewish survival in modern conditions. The legal emancipation of Jews cannot be reversed, and their legal disenfranchisement (*Entrechtung*) is unlikely.[38]

Some of the fundamental elements of Ruppin's interpretation of antisemitism are already present in this publication, but in light of his later works, his interpretation is only partial; the deeper or more primitive anthropological aspect of antisemitism is absent from his discussion. While

he continues to view antisemitism as an obstacle, a counterforce to assimilation, in his later publications Ruppin gradually comes to see antisemitism as a constant factor in Jewish history, in itself independent of assimilation, and develops scholarly means for its study and representation.

Ruppin's perspective on antisemitism is intertwined with his Zionist convictions. In his later publications he refers to antisemitism as a multilayered phenomenon. At its most primitive, fundamental level, antisemitism flows from a "group instinct," an anthropological, permanent feature of human nature: "Any person who is not born within the group but enters its territory as a migrant, or as a member of subjugated group, is regarded an alien."[39] Ruppin is adamant about the irrational nature of this anthropological feature; rational justification follows hatred that is born of the heart, not the other way around.[40] Strangers ultimately are admitted to the group, according to Ruppin, but only contingent on their consent to assimilate, leaving no trace of their difference. This anthropological feature is the source of the Jews' peculiar situation.

The Jews' peculiarity is that despite their dispersion, they resisted such assimilation: "If the Jews had pursued the path of *connubium* from the beginning of their dispersion, there would have been no hatred of the Jews today, but there would also have been no Jews."[41] In this sense Ruppin concurs with Boas, who believed, like many anthropologists, that with the disappearance of the Jews as such, the "Jewish question" too would disappear. Yet unlike Boas, Ruppin opposed that solution. Modern society, according to Ruppin, brought about a fundamental change in Jewish existence. In the modern period Jewish existence was "being ground up"—this is Ruppin's image—between the erosive effects of assimilation on the one hand and the dangers of antisemitism on the other. A minimal rate of antisemitism therefore is necessary for Jewish survival, as long as Jews live as a minority in modern societies.

In his publications after 1933 Ruppin treats Nazi, state-sponsored antisemitism separately, paying particular attention to the role of Hitler and to racial theory.[42] He views it as a "new stage," a radical form of antisemitism and, in cultural terms, an enormous regression.[43] Yet he does not indicate that it is categorically different from or more violent than earlier phases of antisemitism. He differentiates between Christian anti-Jewish sentiment and racial antisemitism and criticizes, in particular, the Aryan racial theory of the "spiritual Judaization" of culture. He op-

poses the view that antisemitism is a specifically modern phenomenon and in practice views its expressions as manifestations of one and the same phenomenon. Ruppin's historical account differs therefore from Simmel's and Boas's, as Ruppin is not driven to separate "objective" and "subjective" features of antisemitism, nor does he attempt to follow the role of the subjective in constituting the "objective." His rejection of a "general theory" of prejudice of which antisemitism is only a subcase is at the core of his concepts and rhetorical strategy. Even when countering antisemitic accusations, his categories do not fundamentally differ from those of his antisemitic opponents. For instance, when he criticizes racial antisemitism, he attempts to refute its allegations based on what he asserts to be the superior standard for the measurement of interracial hatred: the rate of intermarriage.[44] Rather than moving from a specific social phenomenon to a general category, his direction is the opposite: from universal categories of analysis to the specific features of antisemitism as a phenomenon. Indeed from descriptions of the antisemitic accusations Ruppin moves directly to a detailed discussion of statistical rates of Jewish criminality in order to repudiate antisemitic allegations. He responds to antisemitic accusations on the grounds of reality, empirically, and based on the same categories.

Ruppin often claimed that he was not led to Zionism by antisemitism. Zionism, according to Ruppin, enabled the Jews to escape from both assimilation and antisemitism. Jews suffered from antisemitism because the inferiority inflicted on them stemmed from the very peoples to whom they wish to assimilate.[45] Once a majority society of Jews or, more precisely, a society not subordinate to a non-Jewish majority would come into existence, antisemitism would no longer be necessary for Jewish survival. Antisemitism therefore is not a necessary condition for Jewish existence as such but only as long as Jews are a minority.

Summary: Science History versus Jewish History

From the perspective of the conceptual history of the social sciences, Simmel, Boas, and Ruppin belonged to opposing paradigms. Their respective responses to antisemitism were founded on competing social science concepts, and they differed in their scientific and extrascientific goals. While with regard to their respective responses to antisemitism, Boas and Ruppin seem to have undergone far greater changes through-

out their careers than Simmel, in epistemic terms the principal opposition remains between Simmel and Boas, on the one side, and Ruppin on the other. Simmel believed from the outset that social reality was a construction composed of the more elemental individual interaction. Boas, especially after his "cultural turn," gradually moved in a similar direction: antisemitism too was not a natural response to Jewish difference but rather a socially constructed phenomenon. Indeed Boas and Simmel were crucial in shifting the attention to the construction of such social forms, thereby transforming antisemitism into a phenomenon pertaining to society rather than to the Jews as such. In other words, they were instrumental in transforming the social science discussion of the "Jewish question" to the discussion of antisemitism. Ruppin, on the other hand, viewed antisemitism, at least in part, as a natural response to innate and real differences between non-Jews and Jews. Opposing antisemitism more directly than did Simmel or Boas, conceptually Ruppin was also far more integrated into the racial discourse than they were.

But if we shift our perspective from that of the conceptual history of modern social science to the history of responses to antisemitism within the German cultural sphere (and in Boas's case, the American too), a different picture comes to light. Despite their conceptual differences, Simmel, Boas, and Ruppin are part of one shared movement, that which grappled with and responded to antisemitism within science and outside of it, albeit in different forms and with different discursive strategies. Here the most important dividing line is that between antisemites and their opponents. From this perspective, Simmel's, Boas's, and Ruppin's responses differ in their ideological, political, and intrascientific goals, as well as their rhetorical strategies and forms of argumentation, while they share in the attempt to respond to and fight back against the rising tide of social, political, and scientific antisemitism.

Notes

A different version of this chapter was previously published as "Circumventions and confrontations: Georg Simmel, Franz Boas and Arthur Ruppin and their responses to antisemitism," Patterns of Prejudice *44.2 (2010): 195–215.*

1. On the role of antisemitism in Simmel's academic career, see Birnbaum, "In the Academic Sphere."

2. Goren, *Arthur Ruppin*. All translations of Goren are mine.
3. Zimmermann, "Anti-Semitism as Skill."
4. For a concrete reconstruction of the debate, see Bodemann in this volume.
5. Weber's relationship to Jews has been a matter of intense dispute. For a comprehensive yet controversial account of Weber in this respect, see Abraham, *Max Weber and the Jewish Question*. More recently, see Barbalet, "Max Weber and Judaism."
6. Spiro, "Nordic vs. Anti-Nordic."
7. See Wikart, *From Darwin to Hitler*.
8. On Zollschan, see Gilman, "Smart Jews in Fin-de-siècle Vienna." On Gumplovicz, see Adamek, "Ludwik Gumplowicz." On Jews who wrote on race, see Lipphardt, *Biologie der Juden*.
9. For a comprehensive discussion, see Stoetzler, *The State, the Nation, and the Jews*. See also Lindemann, *Esau's Tears*, 131.
10. Köhnke, "Simmel als Jude," 145. Köhnke quotes several of Simmel's letters in which he reports having warned younger Jewish colleagues considering an academic career in German universities of the insurmountable difficulties they were to expect (145, 145n217, 379n91, 146).
11. Köhnke, "Simmel als Jude," 147.
12. Simmel, *Über sociale Differenzierung*, in particular 115–38.
13. Frisby, "The Study of Society."
14. Simmel, "How Is Society Possible?," 9.
15. Simmel, "How Is Society Possible?,"10, 18.
16. Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, 118; Simmel, *Soziologie*, 733.
17. Simmel, "Sociology of the Senses," 118; Simmel, *Soziologie*, 733–34.
18. Stepan and Gilman, "Appropriating the Idioms of Science," 99.
19. Mendes-Flohr, "The Berlin Jew as Cosmopolitan," 23.
20. Rammstedt, "L'étranger de Georg Simmel," 143.
21. Cole, *Franz Boas*, 58–59.
22. Boas, "Changes in Bodily Form in Descendants of Immigrants."
23. It should be noted that Boas's study appeared before Mendelian genetics established itself in physical anthropology. Opponents of the immigration of eastern European Jews and Asians to the United States such as Madison Grant ridiculed Boas's findings as absurd. Several years ago Corey Sparks and Richard Jantz reevaluated Boas's study and questioned his use of statistics. Sparks and Jantz, "A Reassessment." Three prominent statisticians then responded to Sparks and Jantz by reevaluating and validating Boas's statistics. See Gravlee, Bernard, and Leonard, "Heredity, Environment, and Cranial Form."
24. Boas, "Race: What It Is," 22–23.
25. Boas, "The Jews," 39.
26. Stocking, "The Critique of Racial Formalism."
27. Steinberg, "Aby Warburg's Kreuzlingen Lecture."
28. Boas, *Anthropology and Modern Life*, 19–20, 29, 44, 80.

29. Ruppin, *The Sociology of the Jews*, 41 (all translations are mine); Ruppin, *The Jewish Fate and Future*, 207.
30. For a discussion, see Hart, *Social Science and the Politics of Modern Jewish Identity*.
31. Goren, *Arthur Ruppin*, 24.
32. Goren, *Arthur Ruppin*, 33. See his diary entries of November 23, 1894; March 7, 1892; June 12, 1893. On the relationship between young Ruppin and antisemitism, see Doron, "Classical Zionism and Modern Anti-Semitism," particularly 91.
33. It is interesting to compare Ruppin's analysis with Nachman Syrkin's (*Nachman Syrkin Socialist Zionist*), who also integrated a Zionist and a Marxist interpretation.
34. Goren, *Arthur Ruppin*, 33, from Ruppin's diary, August 4, 1893.
35. Goren, *Arthur Ruppin*, 100.
36. See their respective entries in Herzberg, *The Zionist Idea*.
37. Ruppin, *Die Juden der Gegenwart*, 197.
38. Ruppin, *Die Juden der Gegenwart*, 198, 199, 204.
39. Ruppin, *The Jewish Fate and Future*, 207. These statements greatly resemble statements made by Boas, yet Boas viewed them as remnants of a primitive organization of humanity, and Ruppin, it seems, thought that they were constant and immutable. See also Ruppin, *Sociology of the Jews*, 30.
40. Ruppin, *Sociology of the Jews*, 30.
41. Ruppin, *The Jewish Fate and Future*, 208.
42. Ruppin, *The Jewish Fate and Future*, 233–43, 233–34; Ruppin, *Sociology of the Jews*, 33–36.
43. Ruppin, *The Jewish Fate and Future*, 225.
44. Ruppin, *Sociology of the Jews*, 34. Conversely, he criticizes Aryan race theory for working under the false assumption of pure racial types (35).
45. Ruppin, *Sociology of the Jews*, 40.

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