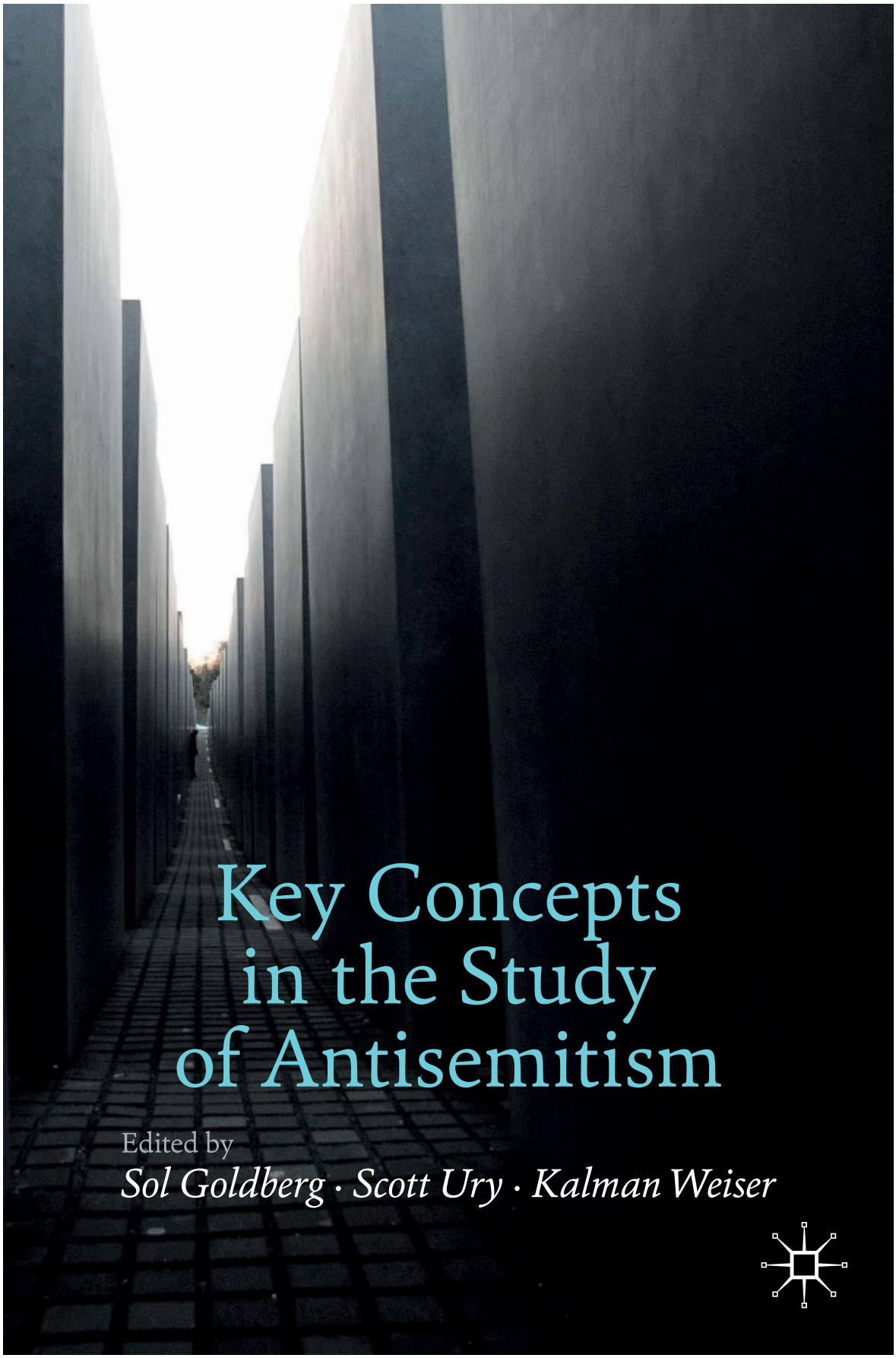

Key Concepts in the Study of Antisemitism

Edited by

Sol Goldberg · Scott Ury · Kalman Weiser

CHAPTER 17

Pogroms

Jeffrey S. Kopstein

What causes pogroms? The outbreaks of deadly violence against Jewish civilians that punctuate recorded history suggest a straightforward answer: antisemitism. What else could possibly explain the rituals of humiliation, including torture, rape, looting, and the forced violation of sacred norms if not antisemitism?

This intuitive explanation has, however, at least two problems, one definitional and another causal. Although "pogrom," having passed into common parlance to describe violence not only against Jewish but also other civilians, now refers to interethnic violence generally, scholars disagree about the necessary and sufficient criteria for the term's proper application. And, if we cannot agree on what pogroms are, then trying to figure out why they happen can seem pointless.

The causal problem is even more vexing. If antisemitism causes pogroms, then the manifestation of the former should predict the occurrence of the latter. But most scholarship on the subject either implicitly or explicitly identifies manifestations of antisemitism by the occurrence of pogroms: antisemitism, which causes pogroms, is inferred from them. This circularity is awkward, but not a completely disqualifying feature of social explanation. Rather, it should spur us to put antisemitism in its proper causal place.

Of course, we would never see a pogrom if everyone loved Jews. But even if nobody ever loved Jews and they were universally despised, which seems empirically unlikely, this lack of affection or outright distaste would not automatically translate into intergroup violence. In the argot of sociology, we

J. S. Kopstein (✉)
University of California, Irvine, CA, USA
e-mail: kopstein@uci.edu

S. Goldberg et al. (eds.), *Key Concepts in the Study of Antisemitism*, Palgrave Critical Studies of Antisemitism and Racism, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-51658-1_17

need to establish the relationship between an orientation (hatred of Jews) and an action (acts of violence against them). The latter follows not only from the former, and the former does not always result in the latter.

Below I first discuss what pogroms are before turning to historical cases to identify plausible causes. Even if a consensual definition of "pogrom" existed, the conditions of their occurrence still aren't easily identified. My first main point here will be that, since antisemitism is more of a constant than a variable, it should be considered a necessary rather than a sufficient condition for pogroms. Were it sufficient, then pogroms should have been ubiquitous over the past two millennia. Since pogroms are not omnipresent, they must be situational rather than inherent. On the other hand, anti-Jewish violence recurs. Scholars thus have the task of trying to determine which situational factors make pogroms much more likely to occur. My second main point here will accordingly be to identify especially important political and social situational factors.

What Is a Pogrom?

"Pogrom," which derives from the Russian verb *gromit'* (to thunder, smash, or break), seems to have been used first in 1871 to describe anti-Jewish riots in Odessa during Holy Week, while its diffusion began with the waves of locally based violence against Jewish civilians that swept through dozens of cities and towns in the Russian empire in 1881–1884, 1903–1906, and 1917–1920. Each wave became more violent than the previous one. The violence spread from larger cities to smaller towns and villages (Klier and Lambroza 1992). Less deadly pogroms also broke out sporadically in the interwar period in the multiethnic borderlands of independent Poland (Żyndul 1994). In the weeks following the German attack on Soviet occupied Eastern Europe in June 1941, local non-Jews attacked and murdered their Jewish neighbors in approximately 300 cities and towns, claiming approximately 25,000 lives. Jewish victims and German military units frequently referred to these atrocities as pogroms.

Can these concrete instances tell us what a pogrom is? What features do they share? Common among these otherwise different events is the violence against civilians targeted for their religion and/or ethnicity. But the pogromists' identities, the level of violence, and the victims' characteristics vary from case to case.

Historians of the first Russian pogroms have identified transient workers and the unemployed in some pogroms, but peasants in others. The 1917–1920 pogroms were carried out primarily by marauding White Army units seeking restoration of the monarchy after the Russian Revolution and Ukrainian soldiers subordinated to Symon Petliura or regional Ukrainian warlords during the civil war (Abramson 1999; Gergel 1951; Klier and Lambroza 1992). By contrast, victims' civilian neighbors committed the pogroms in

formerly Soviet occupied territory in Eastern Europe immediately following the June 1941 German attack. Perpetrators in 1941 included lumpen elements but also doctors, lawyers, and even priests (Kopstein and Wittenberg 2018; Struve 2015). Pogroms were frequently initiated by forces outside of the community, but almost always involved local non-Jewish participation. This element distinguishes a pogrom from a military massacre, though the line distinguishing the two types of events is sometimes blurry.

Although pogroms always involve violence, the level of violence varies greatly, running from plunder to assault to murder. The 1881–1882 pogroms claimed approximately 25 lives, while 47 died in the 1903 Kishinev pogrom (Judge 1995). The sporadic pogroms in interwar Poland created mayhem, but were not especially deadly. The 1941 pogrom wave, by contrast, claimed approximately 25,000 lives (Pohl 2007), while approximately 50,000 Jews died in the Ukrainian and Polish violence following World War I (Gergel 1951).

Many scholars cite as another regular feature of these pogroms rituals of humiliation, rape, torture, and the forced violation of victims' sacred norms and spaces. Other authors point to the carnivalesque atmospheres surrounding pogroms—the mood of the perpetrators and bystanders is often less grim than celebratory (Himka 2011). These rituals and celebrations indicate the purpose of pogroms: to put Jews back in their (subordinate) place within the community or, more rarely, to push them out completely. But even characterizing pogroms as ethnically encoded, ritualized violence designed to return Jews to some sort of inferior status does not genuinely distinguish the era of violence normally associated with pogroms in Eastern Europe from other instances of anti-Jewish violence in other times and places. In fact, contemporary scholars use "pogrom" to describe anti-Jewish riots and "exclusionary violence" in virtually every era of Jewish history from antiquity to the present (Hoffmann et al. 2002).

Causes

The causes for such varied events are, not surprisingly, multiple. Contemporary historians view the pogroms of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as resulting from the general weakness of the state in many outlying areas of the Russian empire; the small and generally poorly trained internal police forces; large variations in the willingness of local authorities to use force to preserve public order; and important economic, social, and political tensions simmering throughout the empire (Aronson 1990; Judge 1995). If state weakness was a frequent source of pogrom violence in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it was all but universally true in the pre-modern era when "states" as we understand them today did not exist and the distinction between public and private authority was hazy at best.

State complicity or action, instead of weak or defunct state authority, is also highlighted in many accounts of pogroms. Contemporary observers of the first waves of pogroms in the Russian empire (1881–1884 and 1903–1906) often maintained the violence was organized, inspired, or otherwise tolerated by central authorities (Klier and Lambroza 1992). Although modern historians of Russia doubt the state's hidden hand in organizing the pogroms, failure to restrict the antisemitic press and especially the dissemination of ritual murder accusations during the Easter/Passover holidays stoked the impression of official complicity.

Deeper sociological factors are highlighted by turning from states to perpetrators and victims. By the 1870s economic competition between non-Jewish and Jewish workers and merchants within the Pale of Settlement could not be attenuated by further restrictions on Jewish residency and employment. The Jewish enlightenment and government policy increased participation in secular educational institutions, which in turn created demands for citizenship rights and expectations for increased social status and mobility. Non-Jews often understood these demands as a challenge to the ethnic power structure. Official Russian explanations of the early pogroms thus cited as the primary causes of violence Jewish "exploitation" of the population, Jews' self-imposed separatism, and a Jewish monopoly over the rural liquor trade. Non-Jewish liberal intellectuals blamed the low cultural level of the non-Jewish masses (Klier and Lambroza 1992, p. 34). Kopstein and Wittenberg (2011, 2018) explain the 1941 pogroms in Poland as an attempt to relegate Jews to their inferior position in the social and political hierarchy by those threatened by the prospect of Jewish equality.

Does this quick tour through the history of modern pogroms help identify the relationship of antisemitism to anti-Jewish violence? Yes, but it does not fully clarify the matter. A satisfactory treatment requires a definition not only of "pogrom," but also of "antisemitism." We must minimally distinguish between dislike of people—e.g., small scale merchants or money lenders—*who happen to be Jewish* and dislike of people *because they are Jewish*. Only the latter type of case should count as antisemitism.

A great deal of Jewish historiography has been bent on connecting anti-Jewish violence to antisemitism, a task roundly attacked in recent years for its problematic characterization of antisemitism. David Nirenberg notes that so much of Jewish history writing trace genealogies of hatred that result in cases of "irrational" violence that are then strung together to show that antisemitism causes violence. "In Jewish historiography, for example, scholars have drawn a line of mounting intolerance from the Rhineland massacres of the First Crusade, through the expulsions and massacres of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, through German ritual murder trials and Russian pogroms, to *Kristallnacht* and the concentration camps" (Nirenberg 1996, p. 7). His corrective is to place the violence that interests him (fourteenth-century France and the Crown of Aragon) into the social,

political, and cultural contexts of the time. Only then may one begin teasing out the specific role of anti-Jewish sentiments in producing the violence at hand.

Hatred of Jews as Jews per se, i.e., antisemitism, frequently matters less than the "particularities" of the circumstances, i.e., than the place of Jews within the politics and society of the age. Most anti-Jewish violence turns out not to have been "irrational" and consequently not entirely or even primarily antisemitic in its origins. Largely instrumental, pogroms need to be understood not only in cultural terms, but also and mainly as politically driven violence.

Does this observation hold for the "pogroms" of different eras? I explain below the concern about "ownership" of the polity as causally central to the 1941 Lviv pogrom in order then to illuminate a similar concern in the pogroms in 38CE Alexandria and 1391 Valencia. Despite huge contextual differences, these cases display significant commonalities regarding neighbor-on-neighbor violence in the context of weakened public authority. All these pogroms, my comparison shows, resulted not primarily from a ubiquitous dislike of Jews (which could be likened more to a slow burn than a hot fire), but from particular social and political circumstances in which the Jews as a minority people found themselves. Politics rather than antisemitism, we shall see, explains the outbreaks of violence.

Lviv 1941

On June 30, 1941, on the eighth day of operation Barbarossa, the German invasion of the Soviet Union, a pogrom broke out in Lviv, the capital city of Eastern Galicia. Ukrainians, and to a lesser extent Poles, massacred their Jewish neighbors and fellow citizens. With the Soviet officials having fled only a day before under heavy German bombardment, the city's Polish population, approximately half its inhabitants, awaited the German arrival with a mixture of fear and hope. They had been the political owners from 1918 to 1939 when, under the terms of the Molotov Ribbentrop pact, control passed to the Soviet Union, which quickly incorporated them into Soviet Ukraine.

The Ukrainians, although only 15% of the city's population, viewed Lviv as their cultural Piedmont. Under the Soviets they were the nominal owners. But the Ukrainian nationalist intelligentsia of this deeply divided city found Soviet rule a huge disappointment, an insult to their hopes for a truly independent Ukraine. They hoped for German liberation and German help in recapturing the city as the capital of their own nation-building project (Amar 2015; Himka 2011; Struve 2015).

The city's Jews, the remaining 35% of local inhabitants, were terrified. The few who could, left with the retreating Soviets; the vast majority who could not, remained. When the Germans arrived, on June 30 and July 1, they discovered three NKVD prisons stuffed with the rotting corpses of massacred

prisoners, mostly (though not only) Ukrainian nationalists, whom the Soviets did not succeed in deporting eastward before the arrival of the Germans. Ukrainian militiamen were brought to the prisons, and with their help word quickly spread that "the Jewish Bolsheviks" had carried out this atrocity and should be made to pay.

For the next two days Lviv witnessed terrible anti-Jewish violence at the hands of the local Ukrainian population and the Ukrainian militia, and under the Nazis' approving eyes (Struve 2015, pp. 247–370). The prisons became the primary scene of the pogroms, as Jews were forced to bury the corpses. But the scenes of violence, humiliation, and brutality spread throughout the city and quickly took on an almost carnival-like atmosphere (Himka 2011). Several blocks away from one of the main pogrom sites, as the pogrom gathered steam, Ukrainian nationalists declared independence and national rebirth in a solemn ceremony. Over the next few days thousands of Jews were killed at close range.

The pogrom in Lviv was but one in a much larger set of pogroms in June and July 1941, before the organized Nazi extermination effort really got underway (Kopstein and Wittenberg 2013; Struve 2015). Jews were robbed, beaten, tortured, and mutilated by their non-Jewish neighbors throughout the strip of land from the Baltic to the Black Sea that the Soviets occupied between 1939 and 1941.

What accounts for these pogroms? Three factors figure prominently in most accounts: (1) the role of the Germans, especially the *Einsatzgruppen*; (2) the impact of 21 months of Soviet rule, especially the massacres in the NKVD prisons before the Soviet departure; and (3) the role of Ukrainian nationalists in organizing and carrying out the pogroms.

At this stage of the war, the Germans preferred others to do their dirty work for them, as the documentary record makes clear. They encouraged "self-cleansing" of "communists and Jews" by locals. Internal German communications make explicit reference to pogroms, e.g., a telegram sent on June 29, 1941, by SS-Gruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich who reminded the *Einsatzgruppen* heads that "nothing should stand in the way" of the local "self-cleansing actions" against Jews and Bolsheviks (quoted in Struve 2015, p. 130). Yet, the Germans also frequently failed to set off pogroms and expressed frustration where they couldn't. A further fact casts doubt on the pogroms as an essentially German affair: in many localities, pogroms occurred in the chaos before the Germans arrived, after they had left, or without much German help.

The similarities in pogrom rituals across cities and towns–Jews being forced to play the Jewish Bolshevik fools, to carry torahs while singing *hatikva* and *moskva maya*, and to bury Lenin statues in mock funerals before themselves being shot, beaten, or burned alive—may suggest a centralized, German script; but the Germans did not force anyone to follow this script. Above all, the presence or absence of the Germans does not help us

distinguish between pogrom and non-pogrom locations within Ukraine. Their presence in Lviv may have facilitated a pogrom and may have made it more brutal. The invasion certainly contributed to the temporary elimination of public authority that could have stopped the pogroms. But Nazi presence was neither a sufficient nor, in many cases, even a necessary condition for neighbor-on-neighbor violence.

What about the Soviet occupation? Did it stoke antisemitism? These pogroms did occur within a specific territory occupied by the Soviets from 1939 to 1941, east of which no significant pogrom activity took place. Most scholars agree that the median Jews probably welcomed the Soviets in 1939 as they entered Western Ukraine as the lesser of two evils. But were Jews the distributional beneficiaries of Soviet rule? Some were, but the vast majority weren't. For every Jew who could not serve in the police force or the civil service, several in small-time trade went out of business or fell under suspicion. Moreover, no evidence suggests that Soviet rule was any worse, or Jews' positions and visibility any different, in villages and cities where pogroms occurred than in those where they didn't. If Soviet rule were enough to cause a pogrom, many more pogroms should have been documented. It is also noteworthy that Ukrainians, but not Jews, who collaborated with Soviet authorities were largely spared retribution by their fellow Ukrainians, a fact suggesting that the pogroms were less the product of anti-Soviet than anti-Jewish sentiments.

This observation points to the third factor: antisemitic nationalism. Ukrainian Nationalist networks (the most prominent being the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists or OUN) figure prominently in both eyewitness and scholarly accounts of the Lviv pogroms. Germans armed and trained them. Their own leaders made statements of solidarity with the German aims of ridding Ukraine of Jews and creating a Ukraine for Ukrainians. Jewish testimony speaks frequently of the blue and yellow armbands being worn. NKVD interrogations of Ukrainians after the war speak of the same story over and over, and evidence exists of an attempted cover-up with a decree issued to Ukrainian insurgents to destroy all records speaking of a pogrom (Carynnyk 2011).

And yet, any account of the pogroms in Western Ukraine as primarily an OUN operation misses something important. The OUN was a small organization spread thinly on the ground. They tried to recruit locals, but adherence was spotty and opportunistic. As compelling as the case against the Ukrainian nationalists might be, therefore, excessive focus on their role risks overlooking an essential feature of these pogroms: the participation of broad segments of the Ukrainian population in the pogrom's mass, carnival character. German and Jewish accounts indicate that these chaotic events encompassed many more perpetrators, bystanders, and rescuers than could possibly have been members or even sympathizers of the OUN. Accounts that feature the OUN thus risk letting off the hook large segments of the population that

stood by without lifting a finger, looked on approvingly, or actively participated in the violence. Antisemitic Ukrainian nationalism certainly played a role in June and July 1941; but just how important the presence of nationalist networks and even antisemitism were remains an open question.

In fact—and now we come to the crux of the matter—antisemitism alone cannot account for why pogroms occurred in some communities and not in others. No doubt antisemitism in Lviv was widespread. But no less antisemitism is evident in many locations where pogroms did *not* occur within Western Ukraine. What, then, was the meaning and cause of the pogroms of 1941? Let me restate this question in terms of the decisive facts: pogroms occurred in only 126 of 1600 towns and villages in Western Ukraine where Jews lived; in the 1474 others, pogroms were either stopped, many by local heroes, or never got off the ground. What distinguished these two very different kinds of localities?

One crucial difference is political affiliation. Pogrom locations tended to have Jewish populations far more mobilized proportionately into Zionist politics in the 1920s and 1930s than communities where pogroms did not occur. The most glaring pieces of data are twofold. First, where pogroms occurred the median percentage of Jewish vote for the Zionists back into the 1920s in this Ukrainian area of Poland was 86%. In Lviv, 70% of Jews voted for Zionist parties in the 1920s. Where no pogroms occurred, the median was approximately half this value, 40% (Kopstein and Wittenberg 2018).

What was Zionism at the time? It was much less a desire to make *aliyah* (indeed, emigration to Palestine was a difficult, expensive, and not very desirable proposition) than a full-chested refusal to join another people's nation-building project, even if the site of a Jewish national home was uncertain. Jews would be Jews, and assertive ones at that. Competing nationalisms, not antisemitism, were therefore decisive in Lviv, and this competition was experienced as a political threat by both Ukrainians and Poles, who saw in the pogroms an opportunity to dispose of their political rivals. This rivalry was itself, however, a function of Jews' own sense of belonging.

Further evidence for a political interpretation of the pogroms is that, wherever the local Ukrainian support for communism had historically been high, as in many towns throughout the province of Volhynia, pogroms were much less likely to occur. The logic here is that communism constituted a non-liberal form of universalism that either helped inoculate the local non-Jewish population against calls to attack their Jewish neighbors or induced them to offer Jews protection. The story, therefore, may be less about the Germans, the chaos, the Soviets, and antisemitism—as necessary as all were for anti-Jewish violence—than about competing nationalism and the ownership of the polity. The explanation proposed here is directly political and instrumental rather than cultural or ideological. The circumstances surrounding the outbreak of intercommunal violence that directly preceded the Holocaust prove not too different from other instances of anti-Jewish riots that punctuate Jewish history, as I will now demonstrate via two pre-modern pogroms.

Alexandria 38CE

One may question whether it is proper to use the term pogrom to talk about the anti-Jewish riots that broke out in Alexandria in 38CE under the rule of governor Flaccus while Gaius Caligula sat in Rome. But the term has been used by specialists at least since the 1930s to characterize the riot, and the latest edition of the only first-hand account of the events, the Greco-Jewish philosopher Philo's *In Flaccum*, carries the subtitle "The First Pogrom" (van der Horst 2003).

The context for the pogrom is clear enough. With the weakening of Alexandrian governor Flaccus after Gaius' ascent to power, the local Greek elite used the visit of the new Judean tetrarch Agrippa, himself a Jew on his way to Judea, to press for Flaccus' permission to use force against the Jewish population in ousting it from neighborhoods where Jews had not traditionally resided. The pogrom lasted several days and entailed beatings, murder, and other ritualized humiliations such as desecrating Jewish places of worship, forcing the city's Jewish women to eat pork, and public punishment by scourging.

Philo himself does not offer a theory for why the pogrom occurred. But scholars have long identified the main reasons. Three groups lived in the city: Greeks, Jews, and Egyptian peasants. Although only the Greeks possessed full rights of citizenship, the Jews had certain communal privileges and rights as well, including the right to free worship: they prayed for, but not to, the emperor. They nonetheless had to pay the head-tax, like the Egyptian peasantry. Greeks and Egyptians had long resented the Jews for having sided with the conquering Romans and for continued Jewish attempts to upgrade their citizenship status, both communally and as individuals (Mondesert 1999, pp. 899–900). Potential Jewish citizenship is what really drove the intercommunal conflict in Alexandria (Tcherikover 1959, pp. 312–13).

What about anti-Jewish sentiments? Scholars have documented the multiple sources of anti-Jewish prejudices in the Hellenistic world: Jews' all powerful yet invisible god coupled with their refusal to worship the emperor or his likeness; their refusal to dine with others which sparked charges of misanthropy; their practice of circumcision; and their supposed clannishness (Schäfer 1997; Gruen 2002). But these scholars are quick to tell us that these prejudices on their own could not have caused the pogrom because they had long been around and such outbreaks of intercommunal violence were exceedingly rare. In short, the violence seems to have been much more situational, instrumental, and political than cultural, religious, or inherent. When the opportunity presented itself with the weakening of public authority, Alexandria's Greeks and Egyptians were less interested in wiping out the Jews than asserting their own preeminence by putting the Jews back in their place (quite literally, since one of the main results of the violence was residential re-segregation). The onset of Roman rule sparked a competition over communal ownership and citizenship, and this competition, rather than

cultural difference or antisemitism, drove the conflict. The conflict, in short, was about politics.

Several pieces of evidence support this assertion. First, the immediate trigger for the pogrom was the Jewish King Agrippa's visit. His stopover on his way to Judea occasioned public expressions of pride among the city's Jews who still had more than a touch of residual patriotism for their homeland. Alexandria's Greeks organized a parody of this visit in theatrical fashion with a local fool, Carrabas, dressed up as Agrippa just before the onset of anti-Jewish violence. Second, Philo's account references the local Greek interest in restricting Jewish citizenship and "ownership." Greek "nationalist" organizations had long been present and active in stoking resentment against the city's Jews; but the Governor's weakened position and the mobilization around Agrippa's visit provided the opportunity for organization (Bergmann and Hoffmann 1987). Third, in a letter addressed both to the Greek and Jewish communities written in 41CE, Claudius, Gaius' successor, first admonishes the Alexandrians "to behave gently and kindly toward the Jews." He then advises the Jews "not to aim at more than they have previously had…and not to intrude themselves into the games presided over by the *gymnasiarchoi* and the *kosmetai*, since they enjoy what is their own, and in a city which is not their own they possess all good things" (quoted in Schäfer 1997, p. 187). This letter, one of the only documents directly dealing with the Alexandrian disturbances apart from Philo's account, strongly indicates that the essence of the conflict, as well as of the pogrom itself, was about "ownership" of the local polity (Smallwood 1970, p. 14) and concern with demographic balance (Gruen 2002, p. 81). Thus, even in this ancient polity where intercommunal relations were not subject to democratic electoral competition, the case anticipates the core of the "ethnic political threat" hypothesis that informs so much of the literature on racial violence in the United States and ethnic violence in other contexts (Blalock 1967).

The violence in Alexandria, while carnivalesque and escaping the control of those instigating it, was less irrational than instrumental. Of course, hatred of Jews mattered and could only be a phenomenon because their distinctive customs, practices, and ties to fellow Jews outside of Alexandria marked them as a group apart. Perhaps anti-Judaism constitutes a necessary condition for the pogrom; but the crowd moved from hatred to violence for political reasons (Bergmann and Hoffmann 1987).

Valencia 1391

The context for Valencia's anti-Jewish riot of 1391—also referred to as a "pogrom" in the secondary literature–would seem to be a straightforward, if more extreme, version of the Christian antisemitic mob exacting revenge for the passion of Christ that Jewish communities had periodically confronted for centuries (MacKay 1972). But both the timing and the scale of violence set this pogrom apart. For one thing it occurred not during holy week but

in the summer, indicating causes separate from or beyond run-of-the-mill Christian anti-Judaism. Even more telling is the differences in scale. The riot amounted to an ethnic cleansing, as after 1391 hardly any Jews remained in Valencia. The pogrom itself occasioned a forced mass conversion of Jews to Christianity, creating a huge class of *conversos*, which ultimately led to the momentous expulsions of 1492.

The violence began in Seville in June 1391 and spread throughout Castile and the Crown of Aragon, reaching Valencia on July 6. The script remained similar in most cases (Wolff 1971). Youths milled about outside of the Jewish ghettos calling for the Jews to convert or die. From there it escalated when the ghettos themselves were infiltrated. In Valencia, attackers used drain pipes and openings in walls to enter the Jewish quarter, raping, looting, and killing its inhabitants once inside. 300 Jews died and the remaining mostly converted to Christianity (Baer 1966, p. 100). The story, upon first reading, seems one of Christianity confronting Jews and violating its own prohibition against forced conversion.

Does it make sense to characterize what occurred in Valencia (and in many other locations in Iberia in the summer of 1391) as motivated by anything other than dislike or hatred of Jews? Modern historians, as it turns out, do not primarily tell a religious or cultural story about 1391; instead they relate it in much more political terms. The particulars and the language may have been Christian, but the main factors involved the social and political role of Spain's Jews in the late Middle Ages. As Mark Meyerson (2004), David Nirenberg, and others have noted, the Jews were considered the King's "treasure," his patrimony, existing outside of the law regulating the relationship between Kings and people (Nirenberg 2014, p. 75). The Jews performed "work" for the King, in Nirenberg's terms, not only as a source of taxation and service, but also as defining the King as being outside of the law. Their position as the King's patrimony induced opponents of royal absolutism to define the Crown, and to characterize royal overreach, as Judaizing and such Kings as Judaizers. Precisely because Jews represented royal power at its most absolute, they could be used to signal that power and even exercise it.

Temporal royal power itself could be defined in these terms, a reality that left Jews in a precarious position should the actual power of the King ever be brought into question, or if the position of the Crown were weakened—as happened in 1391 in Seville first with the death of Juan I of Castille, leaving a minor as heir. Sensing royal weakness, both bourgeois and noble enemies throughout both Castile and the Crown of Aragon sought to redefine the relationship between Kings and people through an attack on the Jews. The Jews were caught up in a constitutional battle.

Throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries Christians questioned Jewish "power" as the King's servants in society and in the economy. Churches never ceased calling for conversion. But popular distaste and religious anti-Jewish instigation remain a constant rather than a variable and

therefore cannot account for why the violence moved from ritualized and sporadic to widespread and devastating in the summer of 1391. This required royal sovereignty and the Jews' position within it being brought into question. Where sovereign authority remained resolute, such as in Morvedre, Jews could be and were protected in 1391 (Meyerson 2004). These pogroms were less about Christianity than about royal absolutism and resistance to its assertion.

Although the case of 1391 does not easily fit the more "political," as opposed to cultural or religious, model of pogrom violence that I am proposing here, we can easily redirect our attention to the competing sovereign claims of would-be absolutist Kings versus people, and the Jews' position within this relationship as a strategic partner or enemy. Putting the matter this way does not eliminate Christian antisemitism as a factor in the anti-Jewish pogroms of 1391—as Meyerson notes (2004, p. 279), such a move would-be "folly"—but it does place it in its proper perspective as a language, a vocabulary for understanding Jews' place within a situation of dangerous dual sovereignty rather than the master account of anti-Jewish violence in the Middle Ages.

Conclusion

The "politics" of Alexandria 38CE or Valencia 1391 are not identical with the "politics" that, I have argued, are causally important in the 1941 Lviv pogrom. The age of mass democracy, of parties competing for power in relatively free and fair elections, translated ethnic and religious demography into political power far more directly and efficiently than politics in the pre-modern world. But the existence of parties and free elections, the above analysis indicates, does not in itself constitute a confining scope condition for a political theory of pogroms. Even in Alexandria 38CE and Valencia 1391, that is, even in eras far before the advent of mass democracy, competing ethnic and religious communities keenly experienced the politics of political ownership. Under conditions of perceived threat to their political dominance, non-Jews could lash out with restorative violence.

Thus, although antisemitism potentially provides the permissive environment for violence, the history of pogroms indicates that, absent other factors, it does not suffice to move collectivities to the kind of violence characteristic of pogroms. Otherwise, many more pogroms would occur than actually do. I have argued here that a crucial supplement to hatred is real conflict over collective goals, over membership in, and ownership of the polity. Other factors may also be at work. The main point, however, bears repeating: pogroms are not inherent to Jewish life nor are they driven only by intractable and permanent cultural conflict; rather they are also situational and politically inspired. And that on its own should be enough to bring the unmediated relationship between antisemitism and pogroms into question.

References

Abramson, Henry. 1999. *A Prayer for the Government: Ukrainians and Jews in Revolutionary Times, 1917–1920.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Amar, Tarik Cyril. 2015. *The Paradox of Lviv: A Borderland City Between Nazis, Stalinists, and Nationalists.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Aronson, Michael I. 1990. *Troubled Waters: Origins of the 1881 Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Russia*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburg Press.

Baer, Yitzhak. 1966. *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*. Vol. 2. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society.

Bergmann, Werner, and Christhard Hoffmann. 1987. "Kalkül oder Massenwahn: Eine soziologische Interpretation der antijüdischen Unruhen in Alexandria 38 n. Chr." In *Antisemitismus und Jüdische Geschichte: Studien zu Ehren von Herbert A. Strauss*, edited by Rainer Erb and Michael Schmidt. Berlin: Wissenschaftlicher Autorenverlag.

Blalock, Hubert M. 1967. *Toward a Theory of Minority-Group Relations.* New York: Wiley.

Carynnyk, Marco. 2011. "Foes of Our Rebirth: Ukrainian Nationalist Discussions About Jews 1929–1947." *Nationalities Papers* 39 (3): 315–52.

Gergel, N. 1951. "The Pogroms in Ukraine 1918–1920." *YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Science* 6: 237–52.

Gruen, Erich S. 2002. *Diaspora: Jews Amidst Greeks and Romans.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Himka, John Paul. 2011. "The Lviv Pogrom of 1941: The Germans, Ukrainian Nationalists, and the Carnival Crowd." *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 53 (2–4): 209–43.

Hoffmann, Christhard, Werner Bergmann, and Helmut Walser Smith, eds. 2002. *Exclusionary Violence: Antisemitic Riots in Modern German History.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Judge, Edward H. 1995. *Easter in Kishinev: Anatomy of a Pogrom.* New York: New York University Press.

Klier, John D., and Shlomo Lambroza. 1992. *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Kopstein, Jeffrey S., and Jason Wittenberg. 2011. "Deadly Communities: Local Political Milieus and the Persecution of Jews in Occupied Poland." *Comparative Political Studies* 44 (3): 259–83.

Kopstein, Jeffrey S., and Jason Wittenberg. 2013. "Pogrom." In *Enzyklopädie jüdischer Geschichte und Kultur*, Band 4, 572–75.

Kopstein, Jeffrey S., and Jason Wittenberg. 2018. *Intimate Violence: Anti-Jewish Pogroms on the Eve of the Holocaust.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

MacKay, Angus. 1972. "Popular Movements and Pogroms in Fifteenth-Century Castile." *Past and Present* 55: 33–67.

Meyerson, Mark D. 2004. *Jews in an Iberian Frontier Kingdom: Society, Economy, and Politics in Morvedre, 1248–1391.* Leiden: Brill.

Mondesert, C. 1999. "Philo of Alexandria". In *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, volume three, edited by William Horbury, W.D. Davies, John Sturdy, 877–900. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nirenberg, David. 1996. *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Nirenberg, David. 2014. *Neighboring Faiths: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism in the Middle Ages and Today*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Pohl, Dieter. 2007. "Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Western Ukraine: A Research Agenda." In *Shared History, Divided Memory: Jews and Others in Soviet-Occupied Poland, 1939–1941*, edited by Elazar Barkan, Elizabeth Cole, and Kai Struve, 305–14. Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag.

Schäfer, Peter. 1997. *Judeophobia: Attitudes Toward the Jews in the Ancient World*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Smallwood, Mary. 1970. *Philo Legatio ad Gaium*. Leiden: Brill.

Struve, Kai. 2015. *Deutsche Herrschaft, ukrainischer Nationalismus, antijüdische Gewalt: Der Sommer 1941 in Westukraine*. Oldenbourg: De Gruyter.

Tcherikover, Victor. 1959. *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*. New York: Atheneum.

van der Horst, Pieter W. 2003. *Philo's Flaccus: The First Pogrom: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*. Leiden: Brill.

Wolff, Philippe. 1971. "The 1391 Pogrom in Spain: Social Crisis or Not?" *Past and Present* 50 (1): 4–18.

Żyndul, Jolanta. 1994. *Zajścia antyżydowskie w Polsce w latach 1935–1937*. Warsaw: Fundacja Im. K. Kelles-Krauza.

CHAPTER 18

Postcolonialism

Bryan Cheyette

Introduction

When I was the youngest member of the Department of English Literature, at the University of Leeds, I was asked to choose the texts for the summer reading group. At the time, I was completing *Constructions of "the Jew" in English Literature and Society* and was attending conferences which inaugurated postcolonial studies. I chose to introduce to my colleagues the so-called "Holy Trinity" (Young 1994, p. 163) of postcolonial theorists—Homi Bhabha, Edward Said, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak—who founded contemporary postcolonial studies in the West. All of these figures articulate racial and colonial discourse in ways which speak either explicitly or implicitly to the history of antisemitism. Said was most explicit when he described Orientalist discourse, in a well-known although under-explored formulation, as a "strange secret sharer of Western antisemitism" (1978, p. 27). Bhabha complicated Said's work by introducing the question of ambivalence into theories of racial and colonial discourse (1994, pp. 85–92). Spivak (1988, pp. 197–221) raised the issue—familiar within Holocaust Studies—of the limits of representation (Friedländer 1992). In general, the founding figures of Westernized postcolonial studies influenced a range of new thinking on antisemitism. The discursive nature of colonial racism meant that antisemitism, in the light of postcolonial theory, could also be seen to be at the heart of European liberal culture rather than an exceptional "evil" that only applies to totalitarian regimes (Cheyette and Valman 2004, pp. 1–26).

Postcolonial theory certainly informed my own work on racial representations in English and American (and later continental European) culture. My

B. Cheyette (✉)
Department of English, University of Reading, Reading, UK
e-mail: b.h.cheyette@reading.ac.uk

S. Goldberg et al. (eds.), *Key Concepts in the Study of Antisemitism*, Palgrave Critical Studies of Antisemitism and Racism, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-51658-1_18

early books (1993, 1996) followed the "Holy Trinity" and foregrounded the ambivalence of racial discourse ("good" and "bad" Jews); the gulf between discourse and representation (Jews' behavior does not account for antisemitism); and the notion of Semitic discourse (rather than reducing complex cultural forms to "anti-" or "philo-" semitism). But while postcolonial theory began to influence mainly Jewish cultural studies (Boyarin and Boyarin 1997) and Jewish literary studies (Cheyette and Marcus 1998), there was a good deal of resistance from mainstream Jewish Studies. This resistance was not, however, a one-way street. Henry Louis Gates' influential collection on racial difference, for instance, which introduced postcolonial studies to the United States in the 1980s, includes little or no discussion of antisemitism among its essays. Commenting on the volume in its epilogue, Tzvetan Todorov is "shocked" by the "lack of reference to one of the most odious forms of racism: anti-Semitism" which, he argues, has been "actively ignored" by its authors (Gates 1986, pp. 370–80). This omission was due in large part to the routine use of "Western Judeo-Christian" to signify a dominant and dominating white colonial culture (Grossman 1989). The history of antisemitism, and Jews as a minority community, fits uneasily within this formulation. This uneasy fit is highlighted when we see that the only discussion of Jews and "race" in Gates' volume concerns discrimination by Jews in the State of Israel (1986, pp. 38–55).

Postcolonial studies was (and still is) a form of area studies which focuses mainly on Africa and the Indian sub-continent. At first, it discounted the Middle East, China, and most other Asian countries. It was also rooted in anti-colonial nationalist movements in these various regions and emphasized, understandably, the victims of colonialism. In contrast, mainstream Jewish Studies, until recently, has tended to focus on European, chiefly Ashkenazic history and to marginalize Sephardic and Mizrahi history in North Africa, as well as other smaller Jewish communities scattered throughout Asia and the Caribbean. Conventional Jewish historiography (especially in Israel and the United States) also played down Jewish victimhood, following Salo W. Baron, as "lachrymose" (Baron 1928). One reason for postcolonialism being relegated to a strand of Jewish cultural and literary studies is that mainstream Jewish Studies was better established, compared to postcolonial studies, and did not wish to be associated with its younger, postcolonial counterpart. Whereas postcolonial studies avoided being Eurocentric, Jewish Studies highlighted the European context of much of Jewish history. The long tradition of Judeo-Christianity was valued within Jewish studies but, as we have seen, rejected as a form of Western dominance in postcolonial studies. Even the post-Holocaust association of acculturating Jews with whiteness was validated as a form of progress within Western Europe and the United States. But it was exactly this form of Westernized "progress" that, from a postcolonial and Jewish cultural studies perspective, was complicit with colonialism and slavery as well as the Holocaust (Bauman 1989).

One clear divide between Jewish and postcolonial studies is the question of Israel/Palestine as illustrated in the Henry Louis Gates volume. The reason for the lack of scholarly insight on all sides, as the editors of a recent collection, *Colonialism and the Jews,* contend, is the "place of colonialism in the history of Zionism and the State of Israel" (Katz et al. 2017, p. 2). From the perspective of postcolonial studies, "Jews and colonialism frequently became reduced to polemics over Zionism, flattening the issue rather than taking account of its nuances" (p. 2). Other reasons for the troubled stance of many postcolonial theorists toward Jewish victimhood include the history of individual Jews who were part of the colonial project; the European history of Zionism; and the contemporary cultural conflicts between "whitened" American Jews and African Americans (Craps 2013, pp. 80–88). But such politics does not explain the resistance to the history of antisemitism within postcolonial studies, especially given the extent to which canonical anti-colonial thinkers, as I will explore in this essay, understood the implications of Western antisemitism for their own colonial history.

Despite such mutual resistance, scholars within postcolonial studies have become among the most important interlocutors, over the past two decades, with those working on new theoretically informed accounts of antisemitism. A recent special issue of *The Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry*, for instance, argues that the "Jewish experience of modernity can be said to provide fertile templates for understanding questions as varied as minoritarianism, diaspora, nostalgia, racialization, ethnicity, cultural difference, creolization, hybridity and colonialism, all of which are central concerns in postcolonial studies" (Goetschel and Quayson 2015, p. 6). What brings together postcolonial and Jewish studies in this formulation is the stress on "minoritarian" Jews as an ethnic minority in the diaspora who are the objects of "racialization" or antisemitism. This contrasts with the "majoritarian" formulation of Jewish history which focuses on the Jewish nation-state of Israel and its maltreatment of indigenous Palestinians. Here the "Jewish experience of modernity" can be mapped onto a Western colonial tradition (Hesse 2016). The ambivalence between "minoritarian" and "majoritarian" versions of Jewish history shows the extent to which the postcolonial understanding of antisemitism is still open to dispute. Equally, accounts of antisemitism which regard it as a unique form of prejudice, wholly different from other forms of "racialization," reject any comparative or intersectional approach.

My essay will distinguish different strands within postcolonialism since the immediate postwar. I will account for the varying disciplinary formations of postcolonial studies in relation to antisemitism which were equally accommodating and unaccommodating. Such tensions were resolved in the flowering of interdisciplinary studies, which do not confine colonial racism and antisemitism to separate spheres. I will explore these different aspects of postcolonialism separately to highlight the resistances and responses to the intersecting histories of colonial racism and antisemitism.

Antisemitism and Colonialism After the Second World War

The study of colonialism was deeply imbricated in the experience of contemporary antisemitism in the 1940s and 1950s. Many anti-colonial theorists and camp survivors at the end of the Second World War—most prominently, Jean Améry, Hannah Arendt, Aimé Césaire, Primo Levi, Albert Memmi, and Jean-Paul Sartre—made connections between the history of genocidal antisemitism in Europe and European colonialism. Améry, for instance, drew on the anti-colonial writings of Frantz Fanon to help him overcome his sense of Jewish victimhood after his time in Auschwitz-Birkenau (Améry [1971] 2005). The anti-colonial Césaire, on the other hand, thought of Nazism as colonialism brought home to Europe ([1955] 2000). Fanon, Memmi, Levi, and Sartre made lasting linkages and analogies between French colonialism and antisemitism throughout their writings (Cheyette 2014, pp. 43–113). But the extent to which the historically intertwined work of these postwar activists and memoirists shaped the later discipline of postcolonial studies is particularly fraught. The progression from this earlier to the later work is not straightforward.

The shifting identification and dis-identification between postcolonialism and the history and experience of antisemitism is best illustrated with reference to Hannah Arendt, the influential philosopher and political theorist who fled Nazi Germany for the United States. After her death in 1975, Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* ([1951] 1973) was primarily interpreted as an account of "totalitarianism" rather than a book where the histories of "Anti-Semitism," "Imperialism," and "Totalitarianism" (the titles of its three sections) intersect. In fact, the section on "Totalitarianism" was added late in the day, in response to the Cold War, and the original title of Arendt's book was *The Elements of Shame: Anti-Semitism, Imperialism, Racism*. The mixed fortunes of Arendt's *Origins*—marginalized in the second half of the twentieth century as Cold War propaganda only to be foregrounded in the twenty-first—indicates just how troubling the conjunction of antisemitism and colonialism has been until quite recently. One reason for the marginalization of Arendt's foundational work within postcolonial studies is that it was mistakenly perceived to construct colonial racism and genocide in Africa as a precursor to genocidal antisemitism rather than as an autonomous history. Today, however, we could describe *Origins* as an intersectional analysis of colonial racism and antisemitism *avant la lettre*.

It is a paradox of Arendt's reception that while her work is both central to the formation of postcolonial studies and Holocaust Studies—the former following *Origins*, the latter following the fierce debate sparked by Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963)—it is only in the twenty-first century that she has been a catalyst for bringing these two disciplines together. One reason for this mixed reception is that the contextualized history of antisemitism exposes the tensions and contradictions within and between early anti-colonial activism

(which drew on the experience of European antisemitism) and later postcolonial studies (which largely ignored it). Arendt's account of Adolf Eichmann has proved contentious to this day which has meant that she has had little influence within Holocaust Studies.

But the extent to which Arendt is a catalyst for new thinking with regard to the history of antisemitism should not be underestimated. Shortly after the end of the Second World War, Arendt in *Origins* refuted the belief in an "eternal antisemitism" (p. 16) as a means of explaining the rise of Nazism. According to Arendt, this timeless conceptualization of "Jew-hatred" turned antisemitism into a "normal and natural reaction to which history gives only more or less opportunity. Outbursts need no special explanation because they are natural consequences of an eternal problem" (p. 16). By restoring the history of antisemitism to time, place, and context (by rejecting an eternalist approach), Arendt was able to compare the "imperialist and totalitarian versions of antisemitism" (p. 9) at the heart of Nazi ideology. A contextualized history of antisemitism takes up the first part of *Origins*, the question of genocidal racism in African colonial culture the second, and Nazi and Soviet totalitarianism the third. In other words, Arendt's comparative perspective is not possible without her rethinking an "eternal antisemitism" and returning it to history. That is why in recent years *Origins* has become a common point of reference for those within postcolonial studies who wish to explore the historical inter-connections between racism, fascism, colonialism, and antisemitism.

A Jewish refugee from Nazi-occupied Germany and France (having escaped from Gurs internment camp in 1940), Arendt was a stateless person for more than a decade. After the failure of European humanism, she struggled to find a language to articulate what she called in her preface to *Origins*, "homelessness on an unprecedented scale, rootlessness to an unprecedented depth" ([1951] 1973, p. vii). Likewise, Arendt's contemporary, the anti-colonial activist Frantz Fanon, searched for a new global humanism, insisting at the start of *The Wretched of the Earth* on "the kind of tabula rasa which from the outset defines any decolonization" (1961, p. 1). Both Arendt and Fanon engaged with the "common enslavement" (Fanon 1967, p. 33) of the oppressed, both on the continent of Europe and within its colonies, and spoke of a "new beginning" (Arendt [1951] 1973, p. 478) for humanity after decolonization and the defeat of fascism.

But these thinkers did not speak with a uniform voice with regard to the value of European humanism after the Holocaust and decolonization, another point of friction with later postcolonial studies that tended to reject European humanism *tout court*. One of the lasting strengths of this early work was its varied attempts to find a language to recuperate the humanist values of Europe that had so recently descended into barbarity. Whereas Fanon, Césaire, and Sartre thought that humanism was mired in the colonialist history of Europe and was beyond salvation, Levi, Memmi, Améry,

and Arendt all attempted to reclaim humanist values. With the breakdown of the grand narratives of the first half of the twentieth century, however, these debates concerning European humanism seemed increasingly irrelevant until the recent focus on global humanism. The rise of ethnic identity politics since the 1970s has meant that these early intersecting histories, written mainly in the 1940s and 1950s, have been largely confined to separate spheres. What is more, it was difficult to locate these entwined histories across Europe and its colonies, given the growth of distinct scholarly disciplines, such as Holocaust Studies and postcolonial studies, which focus on particular racialized victims of the camps and of colonialism.

Postcolonial Studies

When it comes to the history of antisemitism, the early anti-colonial work stands in stark contrast to the resistances in later postcolonial studies. In *White Mythologies*, for example, Robert Young, in an early summary of Said's *Orientalism*, speaks of the history of antisemitism as a form of Western "internal Orientalism" (1990, pp. 125–39) thereby acknowledging it, but only in a degraded form different from the main focus of the field of inquiry. This equivocal gesture fails to link the history of antisemitism to a main variant of Western Orientalism—German Orientalism—that focused attention on the Jewish body and was missing from Said's book (Kalmar and Penslar 2005, pp. 51–67).

To be sure, Said does rightly describe Orientalism as a "strange secret sharer of Western antisemitism" (Said 1978, p. 27) in his formative work. But he also speaks of the "Jew of pre-Nazi Europe" as being eventually "bifurcated": "one Semite went the way of Orientalism, the other, the Arab, was forced to go the way of the Oriental" (pp. 286–307). That *Orientalism* draws from two writers of Jewish origin, Benjamin Disraeli and Karl Marx, in its epigraphs foreshadows this bifurcation. Disraeli's legacy goes the way of Empire, "race," and myth-making; Marx goes the way of internationalism, anti-imperialism, and intellectual critique. In recent years, Aamir Mufti, in his *Enlightenment in the Colony: The Jewish Question and the Crisis of Postcolonial Culture*, has complicated this binary divide. His book shows that the politics of the so-called "Jewish Question" in modern Europe was globalized in South Asia with the partition of the sub-continent along religious grounds (2007, pp. 2–3). The result of this globalized "Jewish Question" is a crisis-ridden Muslim minority in India whose enforced minority status was, Mufti contends, comparable with modern European Jewry before the Holocaust. Such unacknowledged doublings (on both sides of the debate) were part of the formation of postcolonial studies. But the similarity in subject area and approach between the history of colonialism and antisemitism meant that postcolonial and Holocaust studies were to strictly differentiate themselves. In that way, they could be separate academic disciplines.

Such disciplinary distinctions were reinforced by the supposed historical transformation of Jews from minority to majority, victim to persecutor, after the Holocaust. The colonized condition of the Palestinians within the post-1967 occupied territories of Israel made the incorporation of European antisemitism into a postcolonial perspective problematic as Jewish suffering in Europe led to Palestinian displacement. Ethnic studies in the United States, from which much postcolonial scholarship grew, emerged, for instance, at a moment of Third World solidarity with the Palestinians. This, in turn, resulted in sharp academic, political, and cultural divisions between ethnic and Jewish studies, and postcolonial and Holocaust studies. After 1967, the State of Israel, from a Third World perspective, was no longer a bastion of anti-colonial resistance to British rule and was, moreover, increasingly perceived as a colonial-settler state in its own right. The national struggle, at the heart of the Marxian strand of postcolonialism, excluded Jewish nationalism in these terms. But the Zionist school of historiography also thought that suffering peoples could only determine history via a national movement.

Given these uncomfortable similarities, it is hard not to conclude that an intersecting anti-colonial history was repressed so that the new discipline of postcolonial studies could retain a misguided political clarity. Postcolonial studies stressed the plight of the Palestinians; Jewish studies the plight of the Jews in pre-war Europe. Above all, the longevity and supposed hegemony of the Jewish experience within Western culture (hence "Judeo-Christian") made it difficult for those in postcolonial studies to engage with the history of antisemitism without a feeling of being overwhelmed by a more influential and well-established narrative. The history of the Holocaust and antisemitism was mistakenly perceived to undermine the nascent discipline of postcolonial studies in the 1980s, especially in the Euro-American academy. That is why self-designated "new" disciplines—such as diaspora studies, postcolonial studies, and ethnic and racial studies—have defined themselves as superseding a history of antisemitism or diaspora, often constructed as age-old or "classic" (Cohen 1997, pp. 1–29), despite the recent vintage of this history in the twentieth century (Cheyette 2017).

The Cosmopolitan Intellectual

There is also a less obvious reason for the resistance of postcolonial studies to the history of antisemitism: the twentieth-century figure of the rootless cosmopolitan who was particularly prominent within Nazism and Stalinism and personified as the stateless refugee after the Second World War. In stark contrast to the phenomenon of mass national uprisings against colonialism, which characterizes nationalist anti-colonialism, the figure of the rootless cosmopolitan was perceived as elitist, detached from the fray, and unable to engage with Marxian politics. This figure was part of the history of anti-colonialism, as can be seen in Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961).

Fanon was haunted by the image of the deracinated cosmopolitan who contrasted, starkly, with the reborn intellectuals, not unlike himself, who were to lead the anti-colonial revolution. The cosmopolitan has to tear itself away from "the white man's culture":

> …painful and difficult though it may be…. If it is not accomplished there will be serious psycho-affective injuries and the result will be individuals without anchor, without horizon, colorless, stateless, rootless– a race of angels. (p. 175)

The deracinated intellectual—"colorless, stateless, rootless"—is contrasted starkly with the organic intellectual who was "a living part of Africa and her thought" (p. 167). In this reading, the figure of the rootless cosmopolitan (one of a "race of angels") needs to be transformed completely. These concerns were first highlighted by Fanon's friend and comrade, the Tunisian-Jewish Albert Memmi, who notes the long-standing anxieties about supposed cosmopolitan Jews in French colonial culture. In an influential essay on Fanon's "Impossible Life" (taken up by Henry Louis Gates), Memmi argues that it was the disavowal of his origins in Martinique and its people in particular that characterizes a diasporic, cosmopolitan Fanon who "broke with France, the French people and Europe" (Memmi 1973, p. 19). In this reading, Fanon's life becomes something of a family romance with the surrogate fatherland of Algeria taking the "place of Martinique" (p. 24). Memmi thinks of his subject as akin to a déraciné "Jewish intellectual," which accounts for a series of conversion narratives culminating in Fanon's rejection of Algerian nationalism and his turn to pan-Africanism:

> I suspect that Fanon's sudden and intransigent Africanism roused new hostility against him. He might have shared the fate of those Jewish intellectuals who declare themselves universalists and are suspected of cosmopolitanism and even treason; they are not considered sufficiently legitimate members of the community to be permitted such aloofness. For an Algerian so late in the making it was imprudent, to say the least, to put so recent a bond to the test. (p. 32)

Memmi's account of Fanon, it is important to recognize, was based on lived experience. Fanon was denounced by Memmi's acquaintance, Dr. Ben Soltan, as a "Zionist," as well as a "Black Doctor" (p. 26), after a conflict of interest at the Clinique Manouba in Tunis, where Fanon worked for three years following his exile from Algeria in 1956. After working at the clinic for years, Ben Soltan, its director, argued that Fanon was maltreating Algerian and Tunisian patients "on Israeli orders" (Memmi 1973, p. 26) and, according to David Macey, as a "spy and ally of the Jews" (2000, p. 313). The accusation of being an Israeli spy (three years after France's involvement with Israel and Britain in the Suez adventure to neutralize Egyptian influence in North Africa) meant that Fanon had to remove his family from the hospital grounds. Fanon's status as a cosmopolitan outsider or, in Gates' telling phrase,

a "European interloper" (1991, p. 468) reinforced these allegations. No wonder Fanon, in his last book, stresses the role of the organic intellectual, part of the masses who were opposing colonialism, rather than the isolated and rootless intellectual who, from the 1930s onwards, was part of the lethal antisemitic discourse of both Stalinism and Nazism.

As Bruce Robbins has argued, the routine dismissal of the (often Judaized) rootless cosmopolitan within a mainly Marxian strand of postcolonial studies (on the side of the "organic intellectual") continued long after the Second World War. The cosmopolitan is said to have disavowed nationalist anti-colonialism and, in doing so, is assumed to have disempowered and disregarded the wretched of the earth (Robbins 1997, p. 72). Aijaz Ahmad, for instance, uses the Orwellian distinction (in all senses) between the principled "exile"—at one with the subjugated masses—and the depthless "vagrant"—a rootless cosmopolitan above the fray—to portray Salman Rushdie and Edward Said as "vagrants" (Ahmad 1992, pp. 157–58). Only Said's public pronouncements on behalf of the Palestinian people and the death threat looming over Rushdie are said to redeem them from their self-indulgent "political vagrancy" (1992, p. 198). This line of argument was given prominence by Kwame Anthony Appiah who argued, in a much quoted passage, that "postcoloniality is the condition of what we might ungenerously call a comprador intelligentsia: of a relatively small, Western-style, Western-trained, group of writers and thinkers who mediate the trade in cultural commodities of western capitalism at the periphery" (Appiah 1992, p. 149). Arif Dirlik wrote that "postcoloniality is the condition of the intelligentsia of global capitalism" (1994, pp. 329, 356) in a notorious simplification of this passage (which nonetheless is much cited within postcolonial studies). In this Marxian line of argumentation, the rootless cosmopolitan—and by extension the focus on diaspora, minority histories, and mixed or hybrid expressions of intellectual dissidence—are reduced to an expression of global capitalism, itself a reflection of cultural dominance.

But Said, identified by Ahmad as a cosmopolitan "vagrant," explicitly rejected this strand of postcolonial studies and, like Bhabha and Spivak, distanced himself increasingly from institutionalized postcolonial studies *tout court*. In a similar act of distancing in his later years, Said (2003, 2004, 2006) embraced a supposed humanist cosmopolitanism—including Jewish exilic figures and the history of antisemitism—in an intellectual and political return to those whom he regarded as "last Jews" (Cheyette 2012) such as Theodor Adorno, Eric Auerbach, and Sigmund Freud, all refugees from Nazi Germany. In foregrounding these Jewish intellectuals, all in the name of exilic singularity and dissidence, Said highlighted those aspects of postcolonial studies, especially the histories of fascism and antisemitism (and by implication their impact on the Palestinian people), which had been hitherto missing. But he preferred "exile" over "diaspora" in his work and refused the designation "new Jews" for Palestinians when it came to their suffering, so as to articulate

a narrative that was not merely an appropriation of the better-known history of the Jews. What is more, his late work remade all of these Jewish figures in his own image as exiled and isolated intellectuals. The incorporation and distancing of this history by Said was summed up by his self-image, in one of his final interviews, as a "last Jew" or "Jewish-Palestinian" (Viswanathan 2001, p. 458).

Whereas Said incorporated the cosmopolitan Jew within his purview, in stark contrast to the Marxian strand of postcolonial studies, Bhabha took the opposite route. In his early work Bhabha engaged fully with the Frankfurt School, referring widely to exilic German-Jewish figures such as Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno, as well as Freud, and constructed Fanon (following Memmi) as a cosmopolitan figure. In these terms Bhabha, in his influential introduction to Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), no longer thought of Fanon as a revolutionary anti-colonialist but argued that Fanon cannot be "easily placed in a seamless narrative of liberationist history" (Bhabha 1986, p. viii). But this prominent repositioning of Fanon has proved to be short-lived with his biographer arguing, in a damning summary, that Bhabha's version of Fanon has transformed him into a free-floating and empty cosmopolitan "outside of time and space and in a purely textual dimension" (Macey 2000, pp. 27–28). Bhabha, in response to such criticisms, wrote an introduction to *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) which restored Fanon, unconvincingly, as a revolutionary Marxist (Bhabha 2004). The revolutionary certainties of *The Wretched of the Earth*, and what it is to be a "racialized person" (Bhabha 2004, pp. xix–xx), replace the cosmopolitan uncertainties of *Black Skin, White Masks*. This quest for political certainty, in short, is why the history of antisemitism and the Judaized cosmopolitan figure have been expunged from a Marxian postcolonialism.

Old/New Areas of Research

Hannah Arendt's oeuvre—somewhere between literature, history, philosophy, and politics—responded to the horrors of the modern world "without a banister" (quoted in Bernstein 1996, p. 41), without the help of established categories. That was why she was to read novels and other narratives as a way of understanding and articulating, with fierce independence, her experience of totally unprecedented times (Gottlieb 2007). It is not a coincidence, in this regard, that imaginative literature was a key component of the anti-colonial work of the 1940s and 1950s, and also of those who recuperated this history in the twenty-first century. The most important anti-colonial thinkers and Holocaust survivors all incorporated complex and mixed narrative forms to help them comprehend the uncharted territories of mass decolonization and genocidal antisemitism in Europe. Thinking "without a banister" (or established disciplinary boundaries) is also the way in which postcolonial studies and the study of antisemitism can be brought together to enrich the historical record.