



## ***“But there are no longer any anti-Semites!”***

### **Vicious Circles, Jewish Destinies, and a Complementary Framework to Read De-colonial Discourses**

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**Abstract:** In this article I attempt to find in the post-1945/8 renewal of the imperial role of the Jew a complementary framework to understand the supposed de-colonial anti-Semitism. Departing from the analysis of anti-Semitism by the Frankfurt School, I will demonstrate the need to go beyond the vicious circles of the current debate and include the interplay between the centre and periphery regarding the imperial role of the Jew. Tracing the latter through a five-hundred year period, I will re-evaluate typologies of anti-Semitism and point out the need to read post-1945/8 de-colonial anti-Semitism as a confrontation with the colonial legacy that universalizes otherness through the Jewish experience. By tracing the renewal of this construction in the debate between radical Jews and de-colonizers, I will conclude that this role of the Jew is as important for Jewish identity as its disruption necessary for de-colonizers.

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#### **VICIOUS CIRCLES**

Attempting to analyze new forms of anti-Semitism between 1944 and 1947 is a problematic task. The period between the complete uncovering of the “Final Solution

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to the Jewish problem” in Europe and the first decision of the United Nations to divide Palestine as an integral part of the decolonization of European mandates is a convulsive era to consider beyond temporal anxieties. This is especially true if the writers under scrutiny are Central European Jews who fled to the New World to escape their annihilation, only to return soon after the war to their positions at the University of Frankfurt following aggressive recruitment by German federal authorities.<sup>1</sup>

In their original 1944 version of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, following an early work of the former named “The Jews and Europe,” reflected on the role of anti-Semitism as a Freudian “false projection” as well as a Marxist “economic profitability” within the project of modernity.<sup>2</sup> In that particular chapter, entitled “Elements of anti-Semitism. Limits of Enlightenment,” they also describe the changes in the mode of production that leave the racial construction of the Jew as a prism through which it is possible to understand the capitalist building of European national identity that culminates in the fascist experience.<sup>3</sup> In other words, how “in the face of the Jews the harmony of the national community is automatically established.”<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, in the section added to the text in its final version in 1947 (the only modification made to the book according to

the authors), the situation seems to have changed. According to Horkheimer and Adorno, and to the surprise of many of their readers in our context, they clearly alert their audience with the following: “But there are no longer any anti-Semites!”<sup>5</sup> Those who feel outraged by the assertion or those who, on the contrary, trust in the prophetic ethos of the Frankfurt School might not keep reading the dense article and instead begin to draw conclusions about the reasons behind this assertion. Either group could believe that the social theorists are reflecting on the centrality that Judaism takes in the United States, the British mandate of Palestine, or the occupied Central Europe after the defeat of National Socialism, which makes traditional anti-Semitism in the West a growing anachronism. In the United States, just a few years later, Jews would be welcomed as a white group to reproduce a binary racial conception of society.<sup>6</sup> In Palestine (more specifically, in the Western discourses on Palestine) Jews were being recognized as a people whose guarantee of survival was seen as, drawing from traditional political Zionist discourse, a returning to the normalization of a Western-style nation state.<sup>7</sup> In Central Europe, the processes of de-Nazification of entire educational programs that survive today are based in the Jewish experience.<sup>8</sup>

However, Horkheimer and Adorno,

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 165.

<sup>6</sup> Read the description of the incorporation of Jews into the US white society soon after Adorno and Horkheimer left the US in Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks & What that says About Race in America* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 25-52.

<sup>7</sup> In the Zionist discourse the normalization of Judaism in a nation-state as a way to combat anti-Semitism can be traced to the major ideologues of political Zionism. For example, Theodor Herzl declares at the end of his work: “The Jews, once settled in their own State, would probably have no more enemies.” *The Jewish State* (New York: Dover Publications, 1988), 153.

<sup>8</sup> See Hans Han, *Education and Society in Germany* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1998), 91-136.

<sup>1</sup> For a superb contextual description of the writings in general and those in anti-Semitism in particular, please consult Rolf Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School. Its History, Theories, and Political Significance* (Cambridge, Ms: MIT Press, 1995), 350-430.

<sup>2</sup> Find the translation by Mark Ritter to this original article published first in 1939 in Eduardo Mendietta ed. *The Frankfurt School on Religion* (New York/London: Routledge), 225-241.

<sup>3</sup> Find the revised translation to the work in Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, “Elements of anti-Semitism: Limits of Enlightenment” in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 137-172.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 153.

though not visionaries, were experts in the critique of contextual developments. According to the critical theorists, there are no more "anti-Semites," but this cannot be understood as the end of the racially constructed Jew. They demonstrate that since the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a new type of hatred of Jews has been developing, which demands a new framework of analysis. The specificity of the new hatred toward Jews is that "it has practically ceased to be an independent impulse.... The anti-Semitic psychology has largely been replaced by mere acceptance of the whole fascist ticket.... When the masses accept the reactionary ticket containing the clause against the Jews, they are [just] obeying social mechanisms."<sup>9</sup> In contraposition to the common reading led by post-war analysts, Horkheimer and Adorno believe that since the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there has been a rising trend that finds in fascism the epicentre of an already existent wave, but goes beyond this fascism in the new development of capitalism. There are no more anti-Semites per se, but rather those who integrate anti-Semitism as a fundamental part of their framework. The fall of fascism should not be understood as the end of the hatred toward Jews, as it seems to be an inherent component of the development of the capitalist mode of production.<sup>10</sup>

What the critical theorists offer, beyond contextual exploration, are two factors of analysis: research on the novel

nature of the hatred toward Jews and the study of the social mechanisms that such hatred entails. In other words, they analyze the new form of hatred toward Jews (i.e., the incorporation of hatred as part of a common socioeconomic ticket) and engage with this analysis through a critique of the social mechanisms (i.e., the epistemological support for the political economy) that lead to it. This reading of anti-Semitism (or the trends that merge into it) resonates in the current discussion of the topic. The debate in the Western world on the nature of Jewish hatred post-9/11 seems to be a decontextualization of partial adoptions of the model offered by Horkheimer and Adorno. While one trend insists on the study of the new forms of anti-Semitism, the other analyzes the social mechanisms that they express. But the divorce between one factor and the other creates a vicious circle of analysis.

On the one hand, a group of scholars, public intellectuals, and professional activists claim the incapability of traditional definitions of anti-Semitism to apply to the nature of the current hate. Let me clarify this with two examples of such discourse from the United States and France, starting with the work published by Abraham Foxman, National Director of the anti-Defamation League of New York, in 2004. First, this trend generally starts with the connection of current anti-Semitism to a long history of hatred whose continuity is highly debatable: "September 11 has helped to ratchet up the anti-Semitic atmosphere around the Globe...[,] and sad history shows us that, time and again, the Jews have been chosen as the target."<sup>11</sup> However, this long-lived anti-Semitism, from Egypt to Amalek via Christianity to Nazi Germany, reveals a novelty of the new situation: "In today's new mutant strain of anti-Semitism, tradi-

<sup>9</sup> Horkheimer and Adorno, "Elements of Anti-Semitism. Limits of Enlightenment," 165-6.

<sup>10</sup> The use of word Fascism follows not only the authors' term but also a long line of historians and political scientists who are able to comprehend the rise of a particular common ideology in Europe from the 1920s until after WWII under the term 'fascism.' However, the lack of anti-Semitic center in the Italian Fascism (that gives names to all the movement) until 1938 should be pointed out; this is shown in the pioneer work of Meir Michaelis, *Mussolini and the Jews: German, Italian relations and the Jewish question in Italy, 1922-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978).

<sup>11</sup> Abraham Foxman, *Never Again?: The New Threat of anti-Semitism* (San Francisco: Harper, 2003), 11.

tional elements of the extreme right and the extreme left are working together, often in concert with immigrants of Arab descent and terrorist organizations in the Middle East."<sup>12</sup>

The construction of an alliance beyond the limits of any connection to historical precedent is the novel part of this discourse. The professional activist is not ingenuous and recognizes that this new facet appears historically obscure. Indeed, this is "a strange alliance.... Yet the hatred of the Jews is proving to be a powerful enough force to unite these disparate groups."<sup>13</sup> What makes this alliance possible today is "the great technological distribution" that "provides a cheap and powerful electronic superhighway for hate. The sermon delivered in Cairo by a virulently anti-Semitic cleric can travel across the Globe within seconds via internet, e-mail, and the Arab satellite television networks such as al-Jazeera."<sup>14</sup>

Some of these thinkers, now migrating into France, do not limit themselves to re-understanding the new factors of anti-Semitism; rather, they reconstruct the typologies of hatred toward Jews as a way to counter-arrest the new threat. Let me continue to explain the centre of this trend through the work of sociologist and public intellectual Pierre-André Taguieff, published in 2002. Taguieff sustains that the "use of the term 'anti-Semitism' today would be to give a new lease on life to a number of vague and ambiguous representations."<sup>15</sup> In its place he believes that "[B]y avoiding the term we will save ourselves the trouble of having to refute those in the Arab world and elsewhere who, though

proven to be anti-Jewish by their word and deeds, defend themselves with the sophism: 'I cannot be anti-Semitic since, as Arabs, we too are Semites.'<sup>16</sup> In its place, he proposes the renewal of an old lost term that curiously has been used in Euro-American academia to refer to pre-Christian hate toward Jews (i.e., Judeophobia). The possibility of returning to a pre-Christian hatred not only exculpates Christianity but also leaves to the Judeo-Christian West the possibility of being free of internal fratricide.<sup>17</sup>

The violence toward Jews finds its origins in two other sources: first, "all those orphans of 'revolution' who continue to think and find guidance in the traditional Communist element of revolutionary myth, in one of the many Marxist (Leninist, Trotskyist, Third Worldist) or anarchist (neoleftist, neoradical) variants."<sup>18</sup> These groups find in the "anti-imperialist illusion" a connection to the second group—"the bridge between the neorevolutionary milieu and the various movements of radical Islam."<sup>19</sup> The diversity among those who comprise the second group of sources does not seem important: "[T]he fact that there are several different Islams changes nothing: for each Islam has its fundamentalist version." According to Taguieff, "Judeophobia inspired by Islamism (or Islamic youthism) is ideologically inaudible or negligible."<sup>20</sup>

Followers of this trend of thought, prophets of the "new anti-Semitism" or "Judeophobia," partially emulate the model of Horkheimer and Adorno when emphasizing the new role of the supposed hatred toward Jews. In doing so, however,

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>15</sup> Pierre Andre Taguieff, *Rising From the Muck. The New anti-Semitism in Europe*. Patrick Camiller translator (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2004), 11. [The original work was published under the title of *Nouvelle Judéophobie* published in 1992 by Mille et Une Nuits].

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> See for example the use of it and the discussion over the difference with anti-Semitism in the German scholar residing in the US Peter Schafer, *Judeophobia. Attitudes toward Jews in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 197-211.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 48.

they describe the diversity of groups as part of the same project that could direct their protest against the same centre. But if there is any original connection among them, it should be traced in the action of the centre that leaves them—workers, colonizers, and what Antonio Gramsci understood as reactionary “hard nuclei”—in related positions of destitution. However, refraining themselves from analyzing the actions and responsibility of the centre, the authors of this trend not only lose the systemic analysis of the supposed hatred but also discard understanding of the dialectical nature of the relations between the rationality and irrationality of the supposed perpetrators. In other words and in a new practice of Orientalism, not only the far right but especially the old left and (the novel and more dangerous enemy), “the Arabs/Muslims,” seem to find in anti-Semitism an irrational and independent hate, unrelated to a systemic ticket, that goes beyond the “terrorist thirst to destroy civilization.” And when they do, as in a clash-of-civilization framework, their hate is understood not as following a systemic analysis, but as part of an a-historical “essence of irrational hate” of a complete alterity.<sup>21</sup> The question that follows is easily derived from Horkheimer and Adorno themselves: By not analyzing the dialectical systemic reasons of the sup-

posed hatred, we may wonder at the interpretation being adhered to, not by the supposed anti-Semites but by those who attempt to renew the understanding of anti-Semitism.

This last question has been raised by a second group who understand that hidden behind the redefinitions of anti-Semitism is simple and straightforward “real-politics.” Let me take a few moments to uncover the line of reasoning of this group, first in the United States and later on in France. The first of our examples will be a reflection of the work of Norman Finkelstein, published in 2005. The political scientist contextualizes the problem, understanding that the warning of anti-Semitism itself hides problematic reasoning: “[R]ecent events demonstrate just how little the new anti-Semitism has to do with anti-Semitism and just how much it has to do with Israel, as well as how the new anti-Semitism actually signals the open alignment of Israel and its supporters with the far right.”<sup>22</sup> What is at stake here is not necessarily a confrontation of diverse worldviews or even an analysis of the destitution itself. It is, frankly, a project of real-politics led by the centre and its allies: “Just as Israel profited from the US war against terrorism, so the United States profited from the new anti-Semitism, Israel’s apologists tarring critics of US policy with the ‘anti-Semitic’ slur.”<sup>23</sup> Not reducing the problem to explicit conservative projects, Finkelstein understands that this should be seen as an endemic practice in US foreign policy during the past few decades: “[J]ust as the Clinton administration promoted the Holocaust reparation scam to get Jewish money and Jewish votes, so the Bush administration undoubtedly supported the new anti-Semitism scam with the same calculations

<sup>21</sup> One of the readings of Samuel Huntington on Islam is the following: “While the Fourteen hundred years of history demonstrate...that the relationship between Islam and Christianity... has been stormy... Each has been the other’s Other... The underlying problem of the West is not Islamic Fundamentalism. It is Islam, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the superiority of their culture and are obsessed with the inferiority of power.” In contraposition, he demonstrates the racial adaptation of the Jewish people: “Hanukkah, traditionally a minor Jewish holiday... has been elevated into a Jewish Christmas... to fit in better with the dominant culture.” See for the first reference *Clash of Civilizations* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 209-217 and *Who Are We. The Challenge to America’s National Identity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), 62-174.

<sup>22</sup> Norman Finkelstein, *Beyond Chutzpa: on the Misuse of Anti-Semitism and the Abuse of History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 59.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.



in mind.”<sup>24</sup>

The critique finds its complement in France as well. Let me focus on an example from a now famous article published by Tariq Ramadan in 2004. The scholar denounces the existence of an *intolérable chantage* or blackmail of some communitarian Jewish and philo-Jewish thinkers regarding the relationship between anti-Semitism, anti-Zionism, and the particular suffering of the Jewish people.<sup>25</sup> Trying to understand the development, not at a governmental level but at the level of public discourse on the subject, he points out that some intellectual “French Jews [and philo-Jews] who until then considered themselves as universalistic thinkers started, in the national and international level, to develop an analysis each time more oriented by a communitarian desire that tends to relativize the defense of the universal principles of equality and justice.”<sup>26</sup> The “blackmail” is produced by the double standard that is sustained in this discourse. On the one hand, they “demand the Arab and Muslim intellectual and actors to condemn, in the name of the common right and universal values, terrorism, violence and anti-Semitism of the Muslim dictatorships of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.”<sup>27</sup> And at the same time, they are forbidden to raise their voice against those same actions when perpetrated by the State of Israel or its allies. Of this contrasting set of rules, Ramadan argues, if the intellectuals of the former group are required to denounce their people, “should not at least they expect the Jewish intellectuals to denounce in

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> The now famous article “Critique des (nouveaux) intellectuels communautaires” was published by Ouma.com in August 2004 after it was rejected by *Liberation*, *Le Monde*, and *Le Figaro*. See the article in the following link: [http://www.oumma.com/spip.php?article719&var\\_recherche=Critique%20des%20nouveaux%29%20intellectuels%20communautaires%92%20](http://www.oumma.com/spip.php?article719&var_recherche=Critique%20des%20nouveaux%29%20intellectuels%20communautaires%92%20).

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. The translation in mine.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

a straightforward way the repressive politics of the State of Israel, her alliances and other doubtful methods?”<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, he “ask[s] them to be in the first row of the struggle against the discrimination that their Muslim co-citizens suffer.”<sup>29</sup> To conclude, the scholar reflects that it is “legitimate to ask ourselves what principles and what interests [these intellectuals] defend.”<sup>30</sup>

The group of authors of this trend of thought (sometimes at the risk of more than just their careers) challenges either the report of anti-Semitic acts or the above-mentioned double standard when reflecting on the misuse of anti-Semitic accusations.<sup>31</sup> In other words, they do conduct a systemic analysis of the rationality of those proposing the renewal of anti-Semitism. But, in contraposition to Horkheimer and Adorno, this group changes the systemic focus of analysis from the supposed anti-Semites to Jews and philo-Jews to their outspoken political projects, leaving the racialization of Jews in a vacuum. Some of them, such as Tariq Ramadan, do extend the analysis in a different article but conclude without further inquiry that there is a “need to condemn anti-Semitic language of some Muslims.”<sup>32</sup>

Hence, we may ask to what extent should this inquiry of real-politicks be com-

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> It is important to notice that both scholars suffered major career obstacles because of their political stands. While Finkelstein was denied tenure at DePaul University, Tariq Ramadan saw his American visa revoked and he was unable to take a post at the University of Notre Dame.

<sup>32</sup> Prof. Ramadan, despite the critiques he suffered, has clearly explained “the need to condemn the anti-Semitic language of some Muslims” and projected the possible co-existence of Jews and Muslims (see [http://www.tariqramadan.com/articule.php?id\\_article=347&lang=en](http://www.tariqramadan.com/articule.php?id_article=347&lang=en)). My role is to complement the critique showing that some Jewish discourses have collaborated in the anti-Arab language of many Jews.

plemented with an exploration of the interplay between the accusation and the discourse. In other words, what voices are not only Tehran and Caracas but also immigrant communities in France, the United Kingdom, or the United States offering regarding the Jew that cannot be reduced to anti-American/anti-Israel move? And is there a confrontation against the colonial structure of knowledge that requires further analysis? Unfortunately, the critique of the real-politicks of the ticket of the colonial knowledge engages only partially with the problem. It does trace Jewish responsibility, but does not include a full analysis of the function of its figure in colonial discourses, which might reveal new hints regarding racialization. Therefore, it helps us, at least regarding supposed anti-Semitism, to understand and to question the centre but not fully comprehend the interplay between that centre and the peripheral discourses that include the Jew. The question is, now that the periphery is growing "dangerously" in the first world, should the picture of this trend be complemented or not?<sup>33</sup>

## JEWISH DESTINIES

Following our critique the question is: to what extent is it possible to explore a complementary framework in order to analyze the supposed hatred against Jews in a contemporary context?

Instead of decontextualizing our own work and returning to the proposal of critical theorists, we engage with two interrelated tasks: Explore to what extent we can take their double task and think of a frame-

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<sup>33</sup> The problem of Jewish responsibility for the lack of political involvement and the complicity with their own suffering can be seen throughout, for example, Hannah Arendt's work. Two particular movements of her description can be found in the following cites of one of her major works: Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 3-10 and 54-88.

work that denounces the conservative payoff of the first school while at the same time understands the role of the Jew within the discourses that confront modernity. In other words, I propose to explore the new forms of anti-Semitism by taking a closer look at the function of the discourses that nourished Tehran, Caracas, and the immigrant communities in the first world. I will ask whether or not there is a disruptive move that is "dangerously" touching a neurological centre of the coloniality of knowledge in the supposed anti-Jewish discourse. Or, in contraposition, I will ask whether or not these discourses are anti-Semitic (as the first trend of thought would argue) or are just emphasized as part of a game of real-politicks of the centre (as the second trend of thought would assert). I propose that by re-evaluating the figure of the Jew in modern colonial discourse, an alternative perspective of the problem, which challenges the first trend and complements the second, can emerge.

Let me start building on this perspective with a revision of the typologies of anti-Semitism. Traditionally, scholarship in Jewish studies—and by this I take as an example the work of authoritative voices such as Salo Baron (American scholar who was a key in Sartre's re-evaluation of Judaism that later deeply influenced conception of Judaism in American cultural studies)—has typified hatred against Jews in three stages: ancient Judeophobia, medieval anti-Judaism, and modern anti-Semitism. Although there is a permanent link that connects every attitude through a single source of hate ("dislike of the unlike"), in each one of the periods the rationales of this hatred have been different.<sup>34</sup>

The first stage is the ancient and imperial tribal hate, which follows the monotheistic zeal of Jews. While in (what is today)

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<sup>34</sup> Salo Baron, "Changing Patterns of Anti-Semitism" *Jewish Social Studies* v. xxxviii (1976), 5-7.

Israel/Palestine itself, Jews were hated for their violent conquest in the name of God (though current scholarship questions the historical veracity of the violent conquest); in other lands such as Persia, the Hellenistic empires, or Rome (as well as in the colony that took different names, which we refer to today as Israel/Palestine) they were viewed with suspicion because of the monotheism that prevented their assimilation and led to their rebelling against imperial authorities.<sup>35</sup> Surprisingly or not, some current Euro-American scholarship has referred to this pre-Christian hatred as *Judeophobia*.<sup>36</sup> Finding a non-Christian source for hatred of Jews when anti-Western Globophobia (once known as anti-clerical) and Arabs Muslims are accused of being the source of this new Judeophobia is a question for further exploration in other research.

The second stage of hatred is generally known as late ancient and medieval anti-Judaism, and begins with the official anti-Jewish measures after Constantine's conversion to Christianity up until its use in early national discourses. This hatred is rooted in religious intolerance, and at this point most historians differentiate between an endemic of highly anti-Semitic Christianity and a *dar-el-Islam* (domain of Islam) in which Jews, for the most part, were seen as *dimmhi* (peoples of the Book) and allowed to live their fate within a Muslim domain. The justification was theological, and included motives such as their responsibility for obstinately deciding against conversion, their supposed murder of Christians (either by causing plagues or by using Christian blood in Jewish rituals), and the accusations of desecration of holy rites.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> See for example the use of it and the discussion over the difference with anti-Semitism in Schafer, *Judeophobia. Attitudes toward Jews in the Ancient World*, 197-211.

<sup>37</sup> Baron, "Changing Patterns of Anti-Semitism," 10-18.

The limits of this stage are not clear, but its end does not appear until the final installation of ideas of the Enlightenment.

For this reason, the third stage (racial hatred toward Jews) has a less than clear starting point; it overlaps and also presupposes the Protestant reformation, the rise of nation states, and the Industrial Revolution. The racial hatred toward Jews is seen as a consequence and is simultaneous with these developments, making use of philological research that will give rise to ethnic racial constructions. This is, according to most of the traditional scholarship in modern hatred toward Jews, what will antecede the place of Jews during the horrors of the Nazi period. This is the period in which medieval anti-Judaism is replaced by the racial hatred that later takes the name of modern anti-Semitism.<sup>38</sup>

However, this ambiguity in terms of the late rise of racism (anytime after the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and before the 1920s, but mostly traced to the 1870s) is added to the common citation of the 16<sup>th</sup> century phenomenon, *Pureza de Sangre*, which more than anteceded the racialization of peoples. The text demonstrates the existence of a stratification of human beings that has Jews (along with Arabs and, soon after, Blacks and Natives) at one of the levels, owing to an irreducible essence of their past despite their embracing of Christianity. The result of the politics of Purity of Blood for new Christians was not only everyday exclusion but also the permanent suspicion of them being Judeaizers, which would lead to permanent social harassment and segregation. Baron himself acknowledges, one "must not forget that even before modern racial anti-Semitism Jews had considerable experience with racial discrimination."<sup>39</sup> The reasons for not placing the origin of modern racial discrimination of Jews in this pe-

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 18-22.

<sup>39</sup> See the mention of the case by Salo Baron in the same article: Ibid., 17.



riod do not go further than the explanation for the origin of the term *anti-Semitism* "by either Ernst Renan or Wilhelm Marr in the 1870s."<sup>40</sup> This might force one to reflect upon whether or not the theoretical constructions of 19th-century Central European imperialism have not a clear antecedent and source in the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Spanish Empire.

Although this traditional approach and those who revise this "majority historiography" both argue that a full development of racialization does not appear until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the question of how to interpret Purity of Blood remains a problem for those arguing against the existence of racialization since the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>41</sup> Several de-colonial writers have argued that the beginning of modernity should be placed within the imperialism of "Spain... the first modern nation... when the Atlantic supplants the Mediterranean.... Holland that emancipates from England in 1610 and France will continue the already opened path...." It is in this moment that "Modern Europe... the center of World History, for the first time in history constitutes with all the other cultures as peripheries."<sup>42</sup> Following this perspective, beginning in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the creation of otherness in the Mediterranean (which will become an Orientalism that, according to Ivan Kalmar and Derek Penslar, "is not only about Arabs but also about Jews")<sup>43</sup> is at least a contemporary of this creation of stratification of otherness throughout the Atlantic, in what

Walter Mignolo has described as Occidentalism.<sup>44</sup> By placing Jewish racialization in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Jewish studies could be missing the chance to see original connections of anti-Semitism. However, this limitation is not only just in Jewish historiography but also in "all criticism that starts from the eighteenth century and leaves aside a crucial and constitutive moment of modernity/coloniality that was the sixteenth century."<sup>45</sup>

Orientalism in the Mediterranean, Occidentalism in the Americas, and Purity of Blood in the peninsula (later extended to both areas via the persecution or migration of the *marranos*) emerge early in modernity as simultaneous processes of racialization pursuing the economic accumulation that will allow mercantilism and capitalism. This permits us to retrace the roots of racialization of Jews (anti-Semitism) in early modernity to the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century. Placing the beginning of modern racialization within the timeframe of racialization during Iberian imperialisms allows us to understand modernity as a world of economic exploitation and (anachronistically speaking) state terrorism. This inherently connects the expulsion of Jews in 1492 with the end of the *el-andalus* project as well as the plan of colonization in the Americas, the enslavement of Africans, and the need for Western economic dominion over the Far East. In other words, it places the Jewish experience within the common suffering of people living in Arab, American, African, and Asian lands.<sup>46</sup>

The reader may well wonder whether or not the confusion of experiences is an a-historical construction. Unfortunately, the

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>41</sup> Enrique Dussel, "Europa, Modernidad y Colonialismo" in *Obra Filosófica de Enrique Dussel 1963-2003* (Mexico DF: AFYL, 2004), 134. The translation is mine.

<sup>42</sup> Ivan Davidson Kalmar and Derek Penslar, eds., *Orientalism and the Jews* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2005), xiii.

<sup>43</sup> Walter Mignolo, "(Post)Occidentalism, (Post)Coloniality, and (Post)Subaltern Rationality" in Fawzia Afzal-Khan and Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks, eds., *the Pre-Occupation of Postcolonial Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 86-118.

<sup>44</sup> Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), xi.

<sup>45</sup> See the re-definition of the term anti-Semitism in Gavin Langmuir, *Toward a Definition of Anti-Semitism* (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 311-313.

<sup>46</sup> See the conception of "Neo-Diasporic World" in John Docker, *1492. The Poetics of Diaspora* (London and New York, 2001), 189-215.

colonizer himself also made this connection. As it is a well known subject, it is not necessary for us to develop the extant writings on the “Eastern” nature of Jews (the Asiatic of Europe) within the tradition of German idealism.<sup>47</sup> But it might be helpful to think of the connection within the Occident of the West. In both the Americas, diverse groups of “Indians” were identified as Jews. According to Ricardo Feierstein, in the Caribbean and North and South Americas Spanish conquistadors had identified the Indian peoples as Jews through genealogies, such as that of the lost tribe of Reuben or of those who traveled during the times of King Solomon to the mysterious lands of “Ophir.”<sup>48</sup> In North America, placing the problem within the process of Christian evangelization of Jews in the last two centuries, Isaacov Ariel mentions a similar logic recorded by British conquistadors.<sup>49</sup> Through this common racialization it appears that Jews have a special role that ties their history to the origins of modernity, beginning in the 16<sup>th</sup> century during the development of Occidentalism. This function is to make Occidentalism, an ideology that makes the foreign uncanny and the uncanny comprehensible.

According to Tudor Parfitt, what started in the Americas became a worldwide imperial role in which, I suggest, we are currently enmeshed. He argues that Jews were used as a “means for explicating unknown or little-known peoples of wildly different characteristics...”<sup>50</sup> As part of the eschatology, the “Jews were ‘invented in the most remote regions to facilitate the

<sup>47</sup> Ricardo Feierstein, *Historia de los Judios Argentinos* (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 1996), 15-23.

<sup>48</sup> See Michael Mack, *German Idealism and the Jew: The Inner Anti-Semitism of Philosophy and German Jewish Responses* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

<sup>49</sup> Isaacov Ariel, *Evangelizing the Chosen People* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 2000), 9.

<sup>50</sup> Tudor Parfitt, “The Use of the Jew in Colonial Discourse,” in Ivan Kalmar and Derek Penslar, eds., *Orientalism and the Jews*, 51.

Second Coming.”<sup>51</sup> The centralization of this discourse was evident, as we have already demonstrated in the Occidentalism-Judeaization connection, in “comparisons [that] were particularly frequent between Indian religions and Judaism[,] and the production of texts of comparison has continued to this day.”<sup>52</sup> “From the beginning of European expansion,” according to Parfitt’s studies, “Judaism was employed in the decipherment of religions, and Jewish ancestry was used as likely explanation for the peoples Europeans encountered.... The idea of Jewish origins for the indigenous peoples of the Americas was the dominant discourse for much of the four hundred years between 1500 and 1900.”<sup>53</sup> However, far from being a tendency only within Occidentalism in the Spanish and British imperialisms, Parfitt argues that this imperial practice “was widespread to just about every corner of the globe... from the Eskimos to the Australian aborigines” through mostly “the myth of the Lost Tribes [which] became a useful channel for understanding unknown people and races and as a means of categorizing human entities for whom there was no readily available label.”<sup>54</sup>

After this first stage of universalization of otherness, there later followed a second task that completed the generalization of the Jewish case: the separation of supposed elite groups from the rest of the population. Examples include Chapanecas in Central America, Keren in Bruma, Iroquis in Quebec, Zulus in Africa, and Kaifengs in China). The racialization of these groups as Jews began as a means “of favoring certain ‘superior’ peoples in the colonial enterprise of divide and rule.... Those who had ‘noble’ physical or social features were perceived of as coming from elsewhere—very frequently from ‘biblical lands.’”<sup>55</sup> These

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 52-3

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* 52-4.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

"new Jews" were now viewed as the natural allies of imperialism; through the re-writing of the causes of Jewish dispersion in, for example, the Chinese case, these records demonstrate that "the Jews had been appointed by the Almighty as missionaries to teach the world monotheism and those missionaries that got as far as China became the Ch'iang."<sup>56</sup> The extension of this double practice does not limit itself to Spanish and British imperialisms, but also includes French, Portuguese and Dutch examples.

Rephrasing this phenomenon from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the use of the Jew within colonial discourses takes the following path: first, Jews are being projected as the paradigm of universal otherness to comprehend the foreign; second, certain groups are separated from others in virtue of their "Judaism" in order to reflect an intermediary and advanced force of imperialism. As a mirror of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (or its antecedent), the identification of Jews among certain groups led to violent attempts of conversion, sanguinary expropriation, interminable slavery, and in many cases, racial annihilation of Jews (following the first colonial practice) or those separated as non-Jews (following the second one), who were making use of Jewish collaboration.

After the multiple changes in the social place of Jews, argued for in the first few sections above, one would believe that the colonial discourse of the Jew (now white and Western) should similarly have radically changed. After all, the Holocaust and the State of Israel are turning points in the Jewish relationship with the world's system of racial configurations, and led to a re-understanding of its subjectivity. Nevertheless, returning to and at the same time challenging the Frankfurt School, the post-1945 role of the Jew is just a new stage of the same discourse. If during modernity the Jew was

understood as the universal figure of otherness, eclipsing the history of other others, after the Holocaust he or she will turn into the universal figure of the other's suffering, eclipsing the suffering of other others. If during modernity the Jew was being understood as the intermediary and to some extent an advanced force of imperialism, Jewish communities worldwide—the state of Israel in particular—are going to conform to the perspective of the West; the protest of de-colonizers will be an advanced force of the former. Unfortunately, we are not in the presence of an historical constellation à la Walter Benjamin between modern and post-Holocaust époques. Rather, one simply needs to recognize that the narratives of the Holocaust and the State of Israel merely represent a new stage of the imperial role of the Jew. The problem is not, as Finkelstein argues, the "Holocaust Industry" starting in the 1970s, especially (but not exclusively) in North America. It is the figure of the Jew as both a necessary paradigm of otherness and an advanced force of imperialism that becomes a crucial centre in capitalist discourse from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onward, culminating in the extension of the Holocaustic narrative that involves the refashioning of the meaning of anti-Semitism post 9/11.<sup>57</sup>

### A COMPLEMENTARY FRAMEWORK TO READ DE-COLONIAL DISCOURSES

As we have seen, narratives of the Holocaust far from change the imperial role of the Jew. In contraposition, they regenerate that role in a context of Jewish empowerment. Before 1945 and shortly after World War II, Jewish identity might have been seen as an "over-determination" and a "re-

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>57</sup> See the position that read the problem as rising in the US in 1970s in the first part of Norman Finkelstein, *Beyond Chutzpa: on the Misuse of Anti-Semitism and the Abuse of History*, 21-88.

action to anti-Semitism,” as Jean-Paul Sartre analyzed in his highly influential and even more polemical work of 1946.<sup>58</sup> Afterwards, however, Judaism was based not only on the bonds of suffering but also on the extreme paradigmatic nature of such suffering, which—following the imperial role of the Jew—eclipsed the suffering of other others. Furthermore, although Jews eclipse the suffering of others, some might start to see themselves as an advanced force of capitalism, which would make the anti-Semitic analysis of Werner Sombart an ironic and anachronistic self-fulfilling prophecy.<sup>59</sup>

Paradoxically as it may sound, the spectrum of Jewish thinkers who have engaged in this discourse can hardly be reduced to the “new communitarian thinkers” that Tariq Ramadan analyzes so well. Historically it is more ample and includes some of the most radical of the post-1945 Jewish proposals. However, what changed at this stage is not only the incorporation of an extensive line of Jewish thought on the imperial role of the Jew, but also the protest against this inclusion by rising de-colonizing voices. I propose to understand the supposed anti-Semitism as a reaction to the imperial role of the Jew that touches the neurological centre of post-1945 Jewish identity. By identifying the clash between de-colonizers and radical Jews regarding this imperial role of the Jew, I intend to probe three points: first, that there is a formation of Jewish identity through a reformulation of the post-1945 imperial role of the Jew—the use of this reformulation by radical Jews shows its ample extension; second, that the de-colonizers need to disrupt the centre of

post-1945 Jewish identity to confront the coloniality of knowledge, but that this disruption is only anti-Semitic if we reduce Judaism to such an identity; and third, that all the components of the current discourse (the terrorist alliance that looks for the new anti-Semitic forms versus the real-politics blackmail of the criticisms against Israel) are a consequence of this reformulation and were present well before 9/11. I am in no way suggesting that the authors I mention are responsible for or the originators of these discourses. I am only outlining this discussion with arguments from dissimilar origins that were brought into this dialogical clash.

Let me begin by returning to our original thinkers who are part of this radical spectrum, who have been trapped by the reproduction of the imperial role of the Jew. Horkheimer and Adorno, well into the original version of “Elements of anti-Semitism” work, wrote the following during their American exile:

The Jews are today the group which, in practice and in theory, draws to itself the destructive urge which the wrong social order spontaneously produces. They are branded as evil by absolute evil. In this sense they are indeed the chosen people.... *The Blacks must be kept in their place, but the Jews are to be wiped from the face of earth....* Race today is the self-assertion of the bourgeois individual, integrated into the barbaric collective .... *For the fascists the Jews are not a minority, but the antirace, the negative principle as such; on their extermination the world's happiness depends.*<sup>60</sup>

Before the end of World War II and the

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<sup>58</sup> See the translation in the last edition in Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew. An Exploration of the Etiology of Hate* (New York: Schocken Books, 1995).

<sup>59</sup> Werner Sombart, *The Jews and Modern Capitalism* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1982).

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<sup>60</sup> Horkheimer and Adorno, “Elements of Anti-Semitism. Limits of Enlightenment” in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 137, 152.

complete uncovering of Auschwitz, Horkheimer and Adorno single out the Jewish experience because of its exceptionality. They are the only "chosen people," the "anti-race" that needs to be wiped from the face of earth, and the "necessary enemy" for the "Fascists." The comparison is made with "the Blacks" who, after diverse attempts of genocide (for example, the one in Congo in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century), centuries of slavery, and segregation, must simply be kept in their place. The problem is not necessarily historical accuracy, since a brief reading from the 16<sup>th</sup> century world history of the Americas in early modernity or the Ottoman Empire in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century might contradict the critical theorist's readings. Not to mention that several genocides (from El Salvador to Rwanda to Kosovo) followed the Holocaust. What is important to point out is that before the creation of the Holocaust narrative, even before the end of World War II, radical Jewish thinkers understood that racialization is an intrinsic part of capitalist modernity and that the Jewish case is the paradigm of extreme racialization—its particularity singles them out.

A few years later, in the early 1950s, another critical racial theorist, also deeply influenced by Marxist Freudism (in addition to his existentialist persuasion in the analysis of the Jew) will confront, perhaps unconsciously, this trend of thought. Having done an opposite Atlantic trip from the Americas to Central Europe, and few years before being accused of being an Israeli spy (part of the pre-1945 universalization of otherness?) during his struggle for national liberation in Algeria, Frantz Fanon reflects,

The Jew can be unknown in his Jewishness. He is not wholly what he is.... His actions, his behavior are the final determinant. He is a white man, and, apart from some rather debatable characteristics, he

can sometimes go unnoticed. He belongs to a race of those who since the beginning of time have never known cannibalism. What an idea, to eat one's father! Simple enough, one has only to be a nigger. Granted, the Jews are harassed—what am I thinking of? They are hunted down, exterminated, cremated. But these are little family quarrels. The Jew is disliked from the moment he is tracked down. But in my case everything takes on a new guise. I am given no chance. I am over-determined from without. I am the slave not of the "idea" that others have of me but my own appearance.<sup>61</sup>

Confronting (perhaps through Sartre's conception) the trend of thought that led Horkheimer and Adorno to write *Dialectics of Enlightenment*, Fanon starts rejecting the extreme paradigmatic condition of Jewish suffering. It is true that Jews have suffered. However, this should be understood as a fratricide struggle between two white peoples that find themselves within the Judeo-Christian family. To understand the universalization of Jewish suffering as the most extreme case is to transform a provincial internal struggle into a global reference. Logically, reducing the experience to peoples of the "Old War" reproduces a eurocentric perspective of suffering. However, the Black is over-determined in all situations; the problem lies with his or her appearance and is not only a constructed image (what a few decades later will be contested by decolonial thinkers, followers of Fanon himself). His extra-European experience makes him an extreme case that is limited in discourse emerging from the Holocaust.

As we can see, in the years following World War II radical Jewish thinkers and

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<sup>61</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Mask* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 115-16.



de-colonizers confront each other over the source of understanding extreme suffering. But at the same time the critique is followed by an attempt at conversation within a common suffering that follows Western racialization; paradoxically, this could reproduce the same universalization through the Jewish case that Fanon was attacking before: "It was my philosophy professor, a native of the Antilles, who recalled the fact to me one day: Whenever you hear anyone abuse the Jews, pay attention, because he is talking about you. And I found that he was universally right.... I realized that he meant, quite simply, an anti-Semite is inevitably anti-Negro...."<sup>62</sup>

In the second stage of the debate, and with a Holocaust narrative already starting to develop, both sides of the confrontation are clearer, with a dialogue that is more than contextual. Before the early 1960s, Emmanuel Levinas was little known beyond his role as one of the major introducers of phenomenology into the French debate. After returning from a World War II POW internment camp, he became the director of the *École Normale Israélite Orientale* of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, where he trained mostly Maghrebi Jews to spread French universalistic values in the colonies. But after the publication of his work *Totalité et infinité* in 1961, he started to be read as one of the major figures against the ontological violence of Western thought, from Parmenides to Heidegger. In one of his Jewish works that was published almost simultaneously with his philosophical works, Levinas follows the imperial role of the Jew by writing the following:

Among the millions of human beings who encountered misery and death, *the Jews alone* experienced a total dereliction. The suffering common to them as to all the victims of the war received its unique

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 182-183.

meaning from racial persecution which is absolute, since it paralyzes, by virtue of its very intention, any flight, from the outset refuses any conversion, forbids any self-abandonment, any apostasy in the etymological sense of the term; and consequently touches the very innocence of the being recalled to its ultimate identity. Once again Israel found itself at the heart of the religious history of the world... Jewish people... remain on the margins of the world political history, from which it has had the moral privilege of being the victims.<sup>63</sup>

If Adorno and Horkheimer were singling out the Jewish experience, Levinas goes further in understanding the place of Jewish racialization within sacred history. According to the Lithuanian-French thinker, although there might be a common suffering, racial persecution seems to be an exclusive feature of the Jewish experience. Racialization (seen as a global phenomenon arising in the 16<sup>th</sup> century) does not allow for any flight from the condition, and this suffering offers a moral privilege that only Jews can enjoy. Both critical theorists and Levinas share the attempt to combat totalitarianism through reflection on Jewish suffering. However, in the case of Levinas, we may wonder at the consequences of reducing racialization to the Jewish case; further, what are the consequences of the moral privilege that this persecution entails?

A direct protest against this proposal will emerge, once again from a de-colonizer thinker, ten years later. Enrique Dussel, a young Argentine-Mexican philosopher, was finishing his studies in Europe and was deeply influenced by Judaism, as his work

<sup>63</sup> See the translation in Emmanuel Levinas, "A Religion for Adults" in *Difficult Freedom. Essays on Judaism* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 11-13.

*The Semitic Humanism* and his long-term stay as a laborer working in a Kibbutz and in Palestinians territories indicate.<sup>64</sup> In this context he felt deeply attracted to the work of Levinas:

In 1972, in Louvain, I got a group of students together to talk with Levinas. I asked: "What about the fifteen million Indians slaughtered during the conquest of America and the thirteen millions Africans who were made slaves, aren't they the other you are speaking about?... What of all of us who are not Semitic. Levinas looked at me and said: "That is something for you to think about.... I see all of you as hostages." I did not know [whether] he was insulting us by making this observation...." The impossibility to reduce the other to an image of the I may seem unforgivable to a rationalist. But Levinas has a positive yet critical reading of rationality. Between the hostage and the victim appears the "Third Party." In my case the Third Party was the Europe that held as hostage those of us who comprised a small group of teachers and students from South America. The system, the totality[,] is justice (or injustice). Responsibility for the other obligates me to search in the prevailing system or Totality for the causes of the victimization of the victim, and this is the critical moment of ethics as such.<sup>65</sup>

Drawing from Levinas's own vocabulary, which identifies the ethical relationship that should prevail between the Ego

(European Christianity) and the other (Judaism), Dussel is protesting the reduction of the location of suffering to the Jewish experience. Note that the ego is the hostage of the other's demands, but there is a need to extend this to a positive justice when the third party (other others) enters the scene. In Dussel's reading of Levinas there is an inversion of terms, which makes use of Levinas's critique in order to understand victimhood beyond the associations that Levinas offers. According to Dussel, when one leaves the eurocentric conception of suffering, there is a need to reformulate the portrayals and responsibilities of each of the participants within the social framework. Beyond that, as Dussel claims of the Levinas reading, what the critical theorists enjoyed and what Levinas, as the next generation, lost was the engagement in a systematic critique of the socioeconomic reasons (critique of the epistemology of the political economy) that led the totality to victimize the other.<sup>66</sup>

With this example transcending our third generation in confrontation, some readers might argue that we have centralized our Jewish discourse in European Judaism when there are actually Jewish proposals that go beyond the Holocaust as the centre of Jewish definition. Furthermore, these discourses have also been a source for the struggle of de-colonization. One of these voices is the Tunisian writer Albert Memmi, whose support of the independence struggle of his homeland is as well known as his problematic life (he, and his character in the semi-autobiographical novel *The Pillar of Salt*, eventually fled from the modern Islamic-based post-colonial state). Unfortunately the imperial role of the Jew is also present in Memmi's writing, which makes us think that his current posi-

<sup>64</sup> Dussel, *El Humanismo Semita* (Buenos Aires: Edeba, 1969).

<sup>65</sup> Dussel, "Sensibility and Otherness in Emmanuel Levinas", in *Obras Completas de Enrique Dussel*, 1-16.

<sup>66</sup> This encounter was further explored in my recently defended dissertation, *Emmanuel Levinas' Barbarisms: Eastern Talmudic Readings Heterodoxly Encountering the South* [University of Toronto, 2009].

tion regarding Judeophobia is not a novelty.<sup>67</sup> In the early 1970s Memmi wrote:

It is not Zionism that has caused Arab anti-Semitism, but the other way around.... Oppression of the Jew is one of the oldest oppressions in history, and because of that, he is subject to more tenacious, varied, and extensive oppressions than that of many other peoples, including the Arabs.... The Jews lived very badly in the Arab-dominated countries.... The arrival of the Europeans, which was a catastrophe for Moslems, was a sort of liberation for the Jews.... The State of Israel did not stem solely from the unhappiness of European Jews.... The Arab's attitude toward us does not seem to me much different from [what] it has always been .... For the Arabs, only one answer was conceivable: off with the Jews' heads. The Arabs want Israel destroyed.... It is not unreasonable to believe that the lessons taught by the German advisors in Cairo falls in particularly well.... Israel becomes the Jew of the Arab countries.<sup>68</sup>

In Memmi's insightful (but nonetheless extremely problematic) construction of the new phase of the Jewish imperial role and the need for renewing the understanding of anti-Semitism after the Holocaust and defending the State of Israel is clearly understood. Memmi offers the possibility for Jewish discourse to go beyond the limits of the "family quarrel" that Fanon was explicitly confronting. At the same time, he removes from Western imperialism the

<sup>67</sup> Albert Memmi, *Decolonization and the Decolonized* (Minneapolis & London: The University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

<sup>68</sup> Memmi, *Arabs and Jews* (Chicago: J. Philip O'Hara, 1975), 12, 40 107, 162, 27-8.

chance of a common understanding of suffering, which makes Jewish oppression a more extended phenomenon than that suffered by other others. The suffering of the Jew is not only (as it was in Horkheimer, Adorno, and Levinas) paradigmatic, but also and especially universal since it transcends European provincial history. However, while providing the Arab Muslims with their own rationality, it is the connection with European fascism (something current discourses on new anti-Semitism will reproduce periodically) that opens the possibility of a "final solution" for the Jewish problem.

This is a new Orientalist phase in which Arab Muslims are presented as irrational and dependent on the discourses that emerge from the centre, while at the same time as immemorial anti-Semites. An example of this is today's accusation that the reproduction of the *Protocols of the Wise of Zion* can do more damage than the multiple editions of Huntington's *Clash of Civilization*. In that context, what was the defenseless European Jew becomes the defenseless Israel and an integral part of the continuous history of anti-Semitism, extending beyond time and space. Furthermore, the imperial role of the Jew is presented as a "national liberation," an "advanced force" against the "anachronistic Arab forms," that paradoxically accuses the latter of being an integral part of the imperial heritage. The irony emerges when, in the same work, Memmi accepts that Jews received the colonizers with open arms. In other words, the Jew is presented in an ambiguous position as an advanced force without question. Sometimes it is the independent virtue of a people that looks for its de-colonization, comparing the retrograde and dependent Arab mind with the free and independent rational Jew. And sometimes it is the common affinity with the colonizer that makes the Jew a part of national liberation.

A Palestinian thinker himself will si-

multaneously confront and complement the nature of post-1945 Judaism as an advanced force of imperialism and its relation to the reading of Jewish particular suffering. Edward Said writes his works in the United States, exiled from Palestine in the early time of the State of Israel. Appearing in the 1992 preface to his classic work is a well-known paragraph in which Said reflects, "We allow justly that the Holocaust has permanently altered consciousness of our time: why do we not accord the same epistemological mutation in what imperialism has done, and what Orientalism continues to do?"<sup>69</sup> However, the sentence yields a different perspective when we understand it as the end of a long-term response to Memmi.

In 1979, early on in his career, Said tried to divorce the pan-Jewish suffering, understanding that Israel is not the oriental paradise of national liberation for Memmi's peers: "Occidental Jews in Israel have become the oppressors of Palestinian Arabs and Oriental Jews."<sup>70</sup> Said splits the Jewish community, leaving Israel without the rhetorical resource that Maghrebi discourses such as Memmi's can offer. For this reason, only a few years afterwards he will exclude Memmi from any de-colonial reading: "This is not just a matter of Westerners who do not have enough sympathy for comprehension of foreign culture—since there are, after all, some artists and intellectuals who have, in effect crossed to the other side."<sup>71</sup> Examples of this position are "Albert Memmi" among other others who "with any other than a political or ideological justification speaks of the modern Arab mind with its alleged propensity to violence."<sup>72</sup> In this way, Said is able to connect Jewish

exclusive suffering in Europe (the first imperial role of the Jew) with Zionist European imperialism (the second imperial role of the Jew) in order to give birth to the vocabulary of the post-9/11 discussion. On one hand, he makes use of a catch-all concept such as terrorism; on the other hand, he allows for the refusal of intellectuals to engage in an honest critique of the State of Israel:

Here then, is another complex irony: how the classic victims of anti-Semitic persecution and the Holocaust have in their new nation become the victimizers of another people, who have become, therefore, the victims of the victims. That so many Israeli and Israelis and Western intellectuals, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, have not faced this dilemma courageously.... The denial of Israel by the Arabs was I think a far less sophisticated and complex thing than the denial, and later the minimization of the Arabs by Israel. Zionism was not only a reproduction of nineteenth-century European colonialism.... Zionist aimed to create a society that could never be anything but native... at the same time that it determined not to come to terms with the very natives it was replacing with new (but essentially European) 'natives'.... Here Zionism literally took over the typology employed by European culture of a fearsome Orient confronting the Occident, except that Zionism, as an avant-grade redemptive Occidental movement confronted the Orient *in* the Orient.... Israelliterally produced, manufactured a new class of person, not so much 'the Arab'... as the terrorist...<sup>73</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), xxii and xxiv.

<sup>70</sup> Said, *The Question of Palestine* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 69.

<sup>71</sup> Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), xx.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 260-1.

<sup>73</sup> Said, *The Question of Palestine*, xxi, 58-9, 137.

## FINAL REFLECTIONS

In this article, problematically for some I am sure, I have traced a complementary reading of anti-Semitism in colonial and de-colonial discourse without mentioning, for example, Gamal Nasser, declarations such as Durban, and the proliferation of presumably anti-Semitic articles in *al-Jazeera* or *Clarín*. But at the same time, I developed my work on Jewish identity and national construction without mentioning Ariel Sharon, Der Yassin, and *Yedioth Ahronoth* or AIPAC, Christian Zionism, and *The New York Times*. My intention has been to analyze a current heated debate, tracing the discourse by generating a theoretical framework that engages with the generation of the colonality of knowledge and its disruption. For this reason this analysis is an adjunct, and not simply an alternative for those who attempt to understand the problem using different sources. This analysis should be a complement for scholars who examine the problem with other theoretical frameworks.

In this article I have attempted to demonstrate that the elements that constitute the current debate (the terrorist alliance that looks toward new anti-Semitic forms versus the real-politicks blackmail of the criticisms against Israel) were present well before 9/11. They can be read as a consequence of the reformulation of the imperial role of the Jew after 1945. If there is anything new in anti-Semitism it is this reformulation that follows a re-understanding of Jewish identity in the centre, East, and South and de-colonial discourse from the Antilles/North-Africa, South-America, and the Maghreb. If this analysis is plausible, the renewal of the Jewish imperial role is as important for post-1945 Jewish identity as it is necessary for its disruption of de-colonial thinking. Whether or not there is a solution for this dialogical clash is unknown. After all, "to prophesize the past is easy, the future not so much."<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Ernesto Sabato, *Sobre Heroes y Tumbas* (Barcelona: Editorial Sol, 2000), 76.



