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# Hannah Arendt's Analysis Of Antisemitism In *The Origins Of Totalitarianism* : A Critical Appraisal.

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## Abstract

Hannah Arendt's seminal work *The Origins of Totalitarianism* begins with an extended study of the history of antisemitism. Many of Arendt's arguments in this groundbreaking text have been challenged by other scholars. Examining the chief contours of Arendt's account of the rise of modern antisemitism, Staudenmaier offers detailed reasons for approaching her conclusions sceptically while appreciating the book's other virtues. Arendt's repeated reliance on antisemitic sources, her inconsistent analysis of assimilation, her overstated distinction between social and political dimensions of anti-Jewish sentiment, and her emphasis on partial Jewish responsibility for antisemitism indicate fundamental problems with her interpretation of the historical record. A thorough critical appraisal of Arendt's argument offers an opportunity for both her admirers and her detractors to come to terms concretely with the contradictory aspects of her historical legacy.

## Keywords

antisemitism; assimilation; Hannah Arendt; history; Jews; The Origins of Totalitarianism

Of the myriad political treatises produced in the course of the troubled twentieth century, Hannah Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism* stands out as a remarkably durable and influential attempt to integrate philosophical reflection and historical enquiry. Originally published in 1951, the work has attracted both extravagant praise and severe criticism. An innovative reinterpretation of both past and present, propelled by critical *élan* and filled with brilliant insights on an extraordinary variety of themes, the book constitutes a profound and unsettling meditation on 'the central events of our time'.<sup>[1]</sup> The first third of the text, entitled simply 'Antisemitism', begins the narrative with a sweeping account of the emergence of modern antisemitic movements and their importance for the rise of totalitarianism. Due in part to the imposing stature of the entire book, Arendt's opening section is often considered a historiographically well-founded overview of the topic, taking its place among 'straightforward historical accounts' of antisemitism.<sup>[2]</sup>

Recent commentators have contested that judgement. Drawing on earlier objections to Arendt's work, some have argued that her conception of antisemitism is so fundamentally defective that it ruins the book as a whole and strongly vitiates her social thought as such. A 2009 article by historian Bernard Wasserstein presents a forceful case, castigating Arendt for relying on antisemitic sources and 'blaming the victim'.<sup>[3]</sup> Political scientist Shlomo Avineri has offered a similar if more measured perspective, emphasizing Arendt's ahistorical approach.<sup>[4]</sup> Critics from other disciplinary viewpoints have echoed these concerns. In the six decades since *The Origins of Totalitarianism* was first published, scholars have had ample reason to question Arendt's analysis of antisemitism.

Do these charges have substance? From a historical perspective, the answer is a qualified yes. Much of Arendt's account of the genesis, structure and significance of modern antisemitism, I will argue, is conceptually flawed and historically untenable, while nevertheless containing valuable political insights. Though sustaining and substantiating many of the most serious criticisms of Arendt's approach, my appraisal parts ways with those who see these flaws as inevitably undermining her entire *oeuvre*. Such debates are often overshadowed by subsequent controversies, such as over Arendt's portrait of Adolf Eichmann, and a more comprehensive treatment of the whole of her writings on antisemitism and Jewish concerns, both in published works and private correspondence, would be a project well worth pursuing.<sup>[5]</sup> My examination, however, will focus squarely on Arendt's framework for the historical development of antisemitism in the modern era as presented in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.

Approaching the question in this way may suggest an illegitimate truncation of Arendt's argument: her discussion of antisemitism is, after all, embedded in a much larger account of the evolution of totalitarianism, and cannot be adequately understood in isolation from the rest of the book. Conversely, it is crucial to keep in mind 'how deeply Arendt's thinking about the Jewish question and anti-Semitism shaped her understanding of history and politics'.<sup>[6]</sup> Arendt's own stated ambitions for the first section of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* were somewhat ambivalent; in reference to the manuscript she expressed scepticism about 'historical writing' as such,<sup>[7]</sup> and in one public exchange on the book she claimed flatly: 'I did not write a history of antisemitism.'<sup>[8]</sup> Yet she went on to publish the text as a separate volume in 1968 under the unmodified and unrelativized title *Antisemitism*, implicitly granting it autonomous status as her summation on the subject.<sup>[9]</sup> However deficient her analysis of antisemitism may have been, such shortcomings alone do not necessarily undermine the overall conclusions of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* or of the works that followed it. A critical appraisal of Arendt's analysis of antisemitism can nonetheless help to resituate, re-evaluate and complicate the significance of Arendt's political thought in its relation to the historical enterprise.

My critique centres on three themes, examining in turn the nature of Arendt's sources, her conception of assimilation and of Jewish distinctiveness, and her dichotomy between social and political antisemitism and the concomitant emphasis on Jewish co-responsibility for antisemitism. Each of these elements reinforces the others in important ways, and raises theoretical as well as empirical questions about the structure of Arendt's argument and the contradictions it contains.

## Arendt's sources

Arendt's treatment of sources encapsulates the problematic aspects of the 'Antisemitism' section that opens *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Steven Aschheim has aptly observed that Arendt employed 'a defiantly anti-apologetic form of Jewish history' in this text.[10] Yet her theoretical intentions often seem at odds with her evidentiary basis. A conspicuous failure of judgement regarding sources impairs her analysis; while her account has the great virtue of recognizing antisemitism as a historical phenomenon, arising out of specific social formations, not as a natural fact, the particular lineaments she traces frequently lead her investigation astray. Not least among the reasons for these missteps is Arendt's extended reliance on antisemitic sources. The problem is not that Arendt cites antisemitic material for her history of antisemitism; this is the foundation of any historical account. But historians of antisemitism usually draw on antisemitic texts critically, as primary sources to illustrate what antisemites believed. Arendt cites antisemitic texts affirmatively, as secondary sources to support her interpretation of antisemitism. She endorses antisemitic analyses of Jewish history and adopts a number of their arguments as her own.

The most noteworthy instance is her recurrent invocation of the National Socialist writer Walter Frank.[11] The book's preface notes that, while Frank was an 'antisemitic historian' and editor of the Nazis' official publication on the 'Jewish question', the nine-volume *Forschungen zur Judenfrage* (1937–44), his 'contributions can still be consulted with profit' (xiv). While this claim is plausible and not to be dismissed out of hand, it is not borne out by the existing scholarship on Frank and his role in the Third Reich.[12] Arendt's portrait of Frank is notably forgiving, in sharp contrast, for example, to her harsh dismissal of Norman Cohn's scholarship (xi); she describes him as 'the well-known historian Walter Frank' (402) and avers that he lost an intra-party struggle among competing Nazi functionaries and would-be experts on the so-called 'Jewish question' 'for no other reason than that he was not a charlatan' (339).

These dubious assertions have sometimes been adopted uncritically by Arendt's admirers.[13] In reality, Frank's career was built on attacking and discrediting other scholars, and his eventual fall from grace was not due to personal integrity or scholarly merit.[14] Arendt's contrast between Alfred Rosenberg and Frank, meant to compliment the latter, is belied by the long-lasting and close association between the two ideologues.[15] Above all, her regard for Frank's publications on the 'Jewish question' is misplaced. The *Forschungen zur Judenfrage* are filled with treatises on the 'racial biology of the Jews', 'Jewry as a corrosive element', 'the intrusion of Jewish blood' and similar material. Frank's essay in the opening volume of the series denounces 'Israel's absolute domination' over Europe, and warns that the Jews might someday 'drink again from the lifeblood of our people' if not averted by severe measures.[16] Frank conceived of his research as an instrument of National Socialism's ideological and political struggle against the Jewish menace.

The basic orientation of Frank's work strongly circumscribes its usefulness for any critical and historical analysis of antisemitism. The most thorough source on Frank is a 1200-page study by historian Helmut Heiber published in 1966.[17] Heiber shows in extraordinary detail that Frank was consistently extreme in his views on the 'Jewish question', even by Nazi standards, and that his typical tactic in intra-party disputes was to accuse his rival of being soft on the Jews.[18] Heiber puts the adjective 'scholarly' in quotation marks when applied to Frank's Nazi-era publications, and refers to Frank's 'half-historical essays', beholden to 'the cheapest clichés'.[19] Heiber's assessment of the *Forschungen zur Judenfrage* is withering; he portrays the series as Frank's elaborate form of

self-promotion.[20] In light of this, Arendt's assessment of Walter Frank's work as a historical source appears ill-considered and unfounded.

A further example of imprudent reliance on questionable sources occurs in Arendt's discussion of post-Enlightenment Jewish emancipation. This aspect of Arendt's argument is central to her overall account, since she portrays modern antisemitism as in part a 'furious reaction to emancipated and assimilated Jewry' (xii). Her historical depiction of Jewish separateness and the supposed Jewish preference for 'national isolation' is based on the complaints of non-Jewish contemporaries, most prominently Heinrich Paulus.[21] Arendt quotes substantially from Paulus's 1831 jeremiad on 'Jewish national segregation', *Die jüdische Nationalabsonderung nach Ursprung, Folgen, und Besserungsmitteln*, fully endorsing Paulus's argument about the machinations of what Arendt calls 'rich Jews' (33).[22] Texts by non-Jewish authors that are directed polemically against Jews are not in themselves inadmissible as historical evidence of the realities of Jewish existence. But Arendt severely misconstrues the nature and provenance of Paulus's claims. After a further approving quote from this 'valuable little pamphlet' of 1831, Arendt describes Paulus simply as a 'liberal Protestant theologian' and reports: 'Paulus, much attacked by Jewish writers of the time, advocated a gradual individual emancipation on the basis of assimilation' (56).[23]

Heinrich Paulus (1761–1851) was in fact a well-known opponent of emancipation, a position delineated clearly in the 1831 text itself, which Arendt quotes several times. The entry on 'Anti-Semitism' in the *Jewish Encyclopedia* of 1901, authored by historian Gotthard Deutsch, describes his role unambiguously. Deutsch identifies Paulus as one of the foremost 'opponents of the emancipation of the Jews', citing the same work as Arendt, Paulus's *Die jüdische Nationalabsonderung nach Ursprung, Folgen, und Besserungsmitteln*. [24] A broad range of scholarship from the latter half of the twentieth century also directly contradicts Arendt's depiction of Paulus and his stance, listing Paulus as one of the 'spiritual founders of antisemitism', [25] and 'opponents of the Jewish cause', [26] who belonged among the 'prominent opponents of emancipation', [27] and was noteworthy for his 'antisemitic polemics' [28] and 'sharp hostility to the Jews'. [29] He is commonly deemed a 'great opponent of the Jewish claim' to emancipation in the pre-1848 era. [30] The consensus portrait that emerges from the historical literature is of Paulus as a dedicated adversary of emancipation 'who reacted to the development of Jewish emancipation in the pre-1848 era with consistently abusive and hostile commentary'. [31]

Paulus is perhaps best known for his fierce polemics against the liberal Jewish spokesman for emancipation Gabriel Riesser (who is never mentioned, much less quoted approvingly, in Arendt's book), [32] and for promoting the antisemitic notion of a Jewish 'state within a state'. [33] His diatribe on 'Jewish national segregation'—which Paulus considered a direct consequence of the Jews' own proclivities, not of Gentile prejudice or official discrimination—played a significant role in influencing legal and legislative debates around Jewish emancipation in the 1830s and turning them in an anti-emancipatory direction. [34] As a comprehensive history of these controversies states, 'Paulus continually expressed his opposition to the emancipation laws in Germany'. [35] Indeed the very same text that Arendt endorses was a decisive factor in turning southwestern German liberals against the ongoing process of Jewish emancipation. [36]

Perhaps the most thorough and accessible analysis of Paulus's views on Jews appears in Jacob Katz's landmark study of modern antisemitism. [37] Examining the treatise on which Arendt herself relies, Katz characterizes Paulus as a primary proponent of 'the anti-Jewish argument' and as one of the chief 'opponents of Jewish emancipation', listing him alongside Bruno Bauer and Richard Wagner among influential 'anti-Jewish authors'. [38] According to Katz, Paulus offered a series of justifications for 'deep-felt aversion against the possible ascent of Jews to an equal position with Christians'. Katz shows Paulus's tract to be a frontal attack on emancipation, beholden to a panoply of antisemitic prejudices and culminating in 'Paulus's contention that the Jews were incapable of joining non-Jewish society'. Flatly contradicting Arendt's claim that Paulus was an advocate of gradual individual emancipation, Katz notes that in Paulus's view 'individual accommodation was

excluded as a possible solution to the Jewish problem'.[39] Arendt's treatment thoroughly misconstrues Paulus's text, its context, its reception and its impact.

In the cases of Walter Frank and Heinrich Paulus, Arendt's failure to discriminate successfully among sources of varying pedigree, or to comprehend problematic sources accurately in their original contexts, reveals serious evidentiary shortcomings underlying her argument.[40] The difficulty with Arendt's procedure in such instances is not that antisemitic authors should be off-limits to later thinkers; the problem is, rather, that Arendt's uncritical reliance on these sources imparts a series of tendentially antisemitic tropes to her own narrative. From the well-worn stereotype of overweening Jewish pride to the suggestion that Jews come in two basic varieties, intellectuals and bankers, such themes run throughout her text. Arendt thus endorses the view that the Jews themselves preferred 'national isolation' and refused to 'become men' (33). She posits 'a perfect harmony of interests' between 'the powerful Jews and the state' at the expense of 'the Jewish masses', and claims that 'rich Jews wanted and obtained control over their fellow Jews and segregation from non-Jewish society' (33).[41]

This line of thinking yields a number of invidious contrasts: Arendt is often inordinately critical of prominent Jewish figures while absolving their non-Jewish counterparts. Consider her treatment of banker Gerson Bleichröder under Kaiser Wilhelm I and her markedly more forgiving estimation of Wilhelm II. In her effort to portray wealthy Jews as primarily interested in protecting their own privilege rather than in the well-being of Jews as a whole, Arendt takes at face value Bismarck's characterization of Bleichröder's endeavours (32). This account ignores Bleichröder's intervention on behalf of Romanian Jewry and misrepresents his role in responding to Adolf Stöcker's antisemitic agitation, the subject that Arendt addresses explicitly.[42] Indeed Arendt reverses the reality by claiming that Bismarck, unlike Bleichröder, was 'a reliable protector of the Jews against Court Chaplain Stoecker's antisemitic movement' (18); in fact, it was precisely in response to the furor over Stöcker that Bismarck moved distinctly closer to the antisemitic position.[43]

There are undoubtedly plentiful reasons for criticizing Bleichröder, but Arendt's conclusion in this case is conspicuously contrary to that reached by his biographer Fritz Stern, who not only explores the decided lack of harmony of interests between this powerful Jew and the state on more than one occasion, but also emphasizes Bleichröder's efforts in promoting the interests of Jews as a whole.[44] Arendt's remarks about Kaiser Wilhelm II, on the other hand, are notably magnanimous; she claims that he 'changed his antisemitic convictions and deserted his antisemitic protégés overnight when he inherited the throne' (18). This statement is difficult to reconcile with Wilhelm's enthusiastic embrace of Houston Stewart Chamberlain and his theories, not to mention 'the violent anti-Semitic diatribes of the Kaiser'.[45] Arendt goes out of her way to present non-Jewish detractors of the Jews in the best possible light, while reserving her strongest criticism for Jews.

## Arendt's conception of assimilation

Arendt's discussion of the emergence of modern antisemitism in the wake of Jewish emancipation revolves around her critical evaluation of assimilation and its discontents. Deriving in part from her own conflicted relationship with the German-Jewish milieu from which she came, an intensely sceptical attitude towards assimilationist tendencies structures virtually every aspect of her account; for Arendt, what one might call assimilation via dissimulation was the dishonourable path of the parvenu. Her basic position was straightforward: 'In a society on the whole hostile to the Jews—and that situation obtained in all countries in which Jews lived, down to the twentieth century—it is possible to assimilate only by assimilating to anti-Semitism also.'[46] At the core of Arendt's negative perspective on assimilation stands a legitimate, if highly contentious, political and ethical evaluation; as a historical claim, however, her account of Jewish assimilation in the German context harbours important inaccuracies.

Many assimilationist Jews, who 'constituted the vast majority of German Jewry' in the post-emancipation era, were by no means indifferent to, much less complicit in, the upsurge of antisemitism that accompanied their advancing acculturation.[47] The major association of assimilationist Jews, the Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens, devoted considerable effort to combatting antisemitism.[48] Moreover, the Centralverein was 'committed to the public defense of Jewish identity',[49] and remained 'opposed to complete Jewish submergence into German culture', while fighting against 'total assimilation'.[50] Jehuda Reinharz's study, which is critical of the Centralverein's stance on assimilation, concluded: 'For many German Jews the C.V. was the only road to Jewish identification.'[51]

Written without the benefit of historical distance, Arendt's account of assimilation takes little notice of these factors. Her use of the concept is both internally inconsistent and analytically undifferentiated, a double fault line around the very idea of 'assimilation' that runs throughout *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. [52] Arendt begins her chapter 'Between Pariah and Parvenu', one of the most insightful and illuminating contributions to the volume, with an ambivalent presentation of the matter. Here she addresses 'Assimilation, in the sense of acceptance by non-Jewish society', a formulation that stands in uneasy relation to assimilation in terms of 'an accomplished emancipation and resulting social isolation', all within the course of a single sentence (56). The paragraph concludes with a quotation from Heinrich Paulus.[53]

Arendt continues: 'All advocates of emancipation called for assimilation, that is, adjustment to and reception by society, which they considered either a preliminary condition to Jewish emancipation or its automatic consequence' (56). Her argument fails to note that the two conceptions of assimilation are incompatible.[54] To make matters worse, Arendt maintains that non-Jewish 'advocates of emancipation' wanted simply to 'improve Jewish conditions', ignoring the decisive fact that many of them wanted to improve Jewish character—which they considered fundamentally flawed—indeed to improve Jewish existence by making it less Jewish and more Gentile, that is, more Christian as well as more German, more French and so forth.[55]

Overlooking the contradictory demands that this supposedly friendly attitude imposed on Jews, Arendt instead holds the Jews themselves responsible for the resulting dilemma: 'it was characteristic of Jewish intellectuals that they wanted to leave their people and be admitted to society' (64). The same section features another juxtaposition of 'Jewish intellectuals' and 'Jewish bankers and businessmen', both linked and sundered via Arendt's contradictory theory of assimilation (62); the preceding section ends with a remark about 'the crowding of Jews into the liberal professions' (60). Tellingly, this development is presented as grounds for complaint, not as the flourishing of Jews within those professions. Even while acknowledging 'the unreasonable demands of society' (67), Arendt places the burden of the double bind of assimilationist expectations squarely on Jews. Here, as elsewhere, Arendt tacitly equates 'assimilation' and 'amalgamation', sometimes using the terms interchangeably.

The crucial fact obscured by this imprecise usage is that Jewish and non-Jewish proponents of assimilation often understood the concept in opposite and mutually irreconcilable ways.[57] This distinction is a mainstay of the voluminous research on German-Jewish history, from recognized classics of the genre to the latest detailed studies. Michael Meyer notes that in Jewish eyes 'assimilation was not necessarily to gentile society but to certain of its ideals that it had not itself fully achieved'.[58] Uriel Tal similarly writes:

German Jewry understood emancipation in a sense contrary to that in which the Christians understood it, namely, not as the removal of barriers that had hitherto prevented Jews from completely assimilating to their environment, but rather as an incentive to continue to cultivate Jewish uniqueness.[56]

Tal's discussion of 'Conflicting Opinions regarding Jewish Integration and Identity' explores this dynamic in depth.[59] Alfred Low concurs: 'While continuing along the road to cultural assimilation, the Jews insisted on

remaining Jews, nurturing their own national and religious culture and identity.'[60] Low contrasts this endeavour to the demand raised by non-Jewish advocates of assimilation 'to completely relinquish Jewish identity, irrespective of whether it was primarily religious, cultural, or national in character. The German Jew was to shed his Judaic heritage, cease to be a Jew, and eagerly embrace Germanism.'[61] Recent research by Christian Wiese, Sharon Gillerman and others abundantly confirms these conclusions.[62]

The necessary differentiations so integral to meaningful analysis of Jewish assimilation in modern Germany are largely absent in Arendt's account; she consistently fails to distinguish what non-Jewish proponents of assimilation meant by the idea from what its Jewish advocates meant. In *The Origins of Totalitarianism* she goes so far as to say: 'When the emancipation finally came to pass, most assimilated Jews escaped into conversion to Christianity' (59). This claim is empirically very wide of the mark.[63] More important, her formulation ignores the social and political context within which conversion took place, and elides the crucial distinctions between amalgamation and assimilation. Whatever one makes of the notion of a distrusted minority accommodating itself to the demands of the dominant society, in the German context it is quite mistaken to equate such efforts with an abandonment of Jewish identity. Imputing an amalgamationist impulse to Jews who vigorously resisted this impulse exacerbates the problem and badly misconstrues the political situation at the time.

Corresponding to Arendt's dim view of assimilation is her deeply ambivalent attitude towards Jewish difference and distinctiveness. Early in the book she argues that without special state intervention 'the Jews could hardly have preserved their group identity' (14). She sometimes portrays Jewish communities within modernizing European societies not as a form of ethnic, cultural or religious differentiation but as 'a special clique' (55). Indeed, she asserts that the Jews, 'alone among all other groups, have themselves, within their history and their religion, expressed a well-known principle of separation' (55).[64] She describes with disapproval 'the closed ranks of Jewry' prior to emancipation, 'a separate group outside of society', a 'closed society of the Jews' who were merely 'vegetating outside of state and society' (99). Many of her caustic remarks about later generations of Jews, whether haughty financiers or unworldly intellectuals, centre on their alleged penchant for separating themselves from their surroundings.

This leaves Arendt's analysis up against something of a paradox: she does not want assimilation and she does not want separation.[65] Her interpretive framework is predicated on an equivocal attitude towards the very existence of Jewish distinctiveness. She maintains that the 'average Jew' was 'neither a parvenu nor a "conscious pariah"' but rather reflected 'an empty sense of difference' (67). She does not provide a positive account of Jewish difference, even a counterfactual or hypothetical one, and the only alternatives she acknowledges are individual pariahdom or parvenu-like capitulation. Arendt pathologizes Jewish difference rather than normalizing it: Jewishness figures as either virtue or vice (83). In the course of her overall narrative, this ostensible fault is generally ascribed not to the distorting impact of antisemitism itself but to the wayward predilections of the Jews.

## Arendt's conception of antisemitism

This throws the central question into sharp relief: how did Arendt understand antisemitism and its causes? According to her version of the history of antisemitism, 'Jewish separateness' was due as much to Jewish beliefs as to non-Jewish actions (xii). She strongly downplays the role of 'Gentile hostility' and asserts that 'Jewish dissociation from the Gentile world' was 'of greater relevance for Jewish history than the reverse' (xiii). In Arendt's view, a racialized conception of 'the alien character of the Jewish people' arose first among the Jews, not among Gentiles, and indeed did so 'without any outside interference' in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (xii). Even in the context of the early twentieth century, she continues to hold Jews especially responsible for their predicament: 'The Jews were more deluded by the appearances of the golden age of security than any other section of the European peoples' (51). A similar fixation on the allegedly unique features of Jewish



existence leads Arendt to identify the Jews as 'the only non-national European people' (22): 'Of all the European peoples, the Jews had been the only one without a state of their own' in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (23).[66]

Arendt's account repeatedly emphasizes Jewish co-responsibility for the emergence of antisemitism. One of the more enduring elements in her argument is the rejection of two competing theories of antisemitism, the scapegoat thesis and the eternal antisemitism thesis. Arendt's chief complaint against both theories, however, is that they 'deny all specific Jewish responsibility' for the rise of antisemitism (8). The source of modern antisemitism, she insists, 'must be found in certain aspects of Jewish history and specifically Jewish functions during the last centuries' (9).[67] Hence her focus on the various misdeeds, failures, lapses, omissions and transgressions of individual Jews, particular Jewish strata, and indeed of the Jewish people itself.

Arendt's litany of Jewish inadequacies begins with the charge that the Jewish people 'avoided all political action for two thousand years' (8). Even accounting for Arendt's tendency to stylistic overstatement, this claim has little to recommend it beyond providing an artificial foil for her subsequent argument; it simply disregards the extensive, substantial and complex history of Jewish political action.[68] Arendt also offers detailed complaints about specific Jewish figures who failed to live up to proper standards of comportment. Based in part on yet another affirmative citation of Walter Frank, she describes at length several rootless, striving French Jews involved in high finance and 'shady transactions' (98), calling these parvenu Jewish bankers 'parasites' who provided an 'alibi' to antisemites (99).[69] Her depiction of the convergence between Jewish emancipation and the rise of the modern state places pronounced emphasis on the central role of Jews who were 'too rich' and 'too powerful' to remain in the ghetto and who, even after the demise of the court Jews, continued to 'manipulate the business of the state' (99).

Arendt's account of 'Jewish financiers' in South Africa is similarly unflattering: 'it was precisely the mob element among the Jewish people who turned into financiers' (201).[70] Resurrecting the spurious distinction between productive and parasitic capital, Arendt rebukes 'the steadfast refusal of the largest segment of Jewish wealth to engage itself in industrial enterprises and to leave the tradition of capital trading' (354). The trouble with such portrayals is not just the over-emphasis on Jewish wealth and power or the focus on Jewish actions rather than non-Jewish beliefs. The constellation of images is all too familiar: the arrogant nature of Jewish self-segregation, an inordinate involvement in finance capital, disreputable business practices and disagreeable personal habits, a rogues' gallery of parasitical and rootless types. Large stretches of Arendt's historical reconstruction read like an uncritical reworking of antisemitic simplifications.

Arendt in fact posits an 'intimate relationship' between antisemitic fantasies and the realities of Jewish existence (28, repeated verbatim on 40), and asserts that there is 'some truth' to antisemitic images of Jews (242), tracing these antisemitic beliefs back to the 'ambiguous role which Jews played in European society since their emancipation' (354).[71] At one point she refers to a particular form of antisemitism that 'had emancipated itself from all specific Jewish deeds and misdeeds' (241). But this is true of antisemitism as such. In a similar context Arendt writes: 'The true significance of the pan-movements' antisemitism is that hatred of the Jews was, for the first time, severed from all actual experience concerning the Jewish people, political, social, or economic, and followed only the peculiar logic of an ideology' (229).

This purely contingent relationship between antisemitic perceptions and actual Jewish behaviour, between antisemitic convictions and the real world of Jewish-Gentile interactions, is a fundamental characteristic of antisemitism *per se*; it did not first emerge within the Austrian pan-German movement (whose members had extensive 'actual experience' with Jews). The point that Arendt accurately describes here, but fails to extend to her analysis as a whole, is that antisemitism is an ideology about Jews that is autonomous from and only tangentially related to the true conditions of Jewish existence.

Arendt's neglect of this basic postulate mars not only her account of Jewish life but her depiction of antisemites themselves. Her thesis of the anti-political thrust of antisemitic parties does not account for the fact that mainstream conservative parties, pillars of the German state at the time, adopted antisemitic policies into their programmes and practice. Hence her claim that the antisemitic parties sought to 'openly attack the state itself' (39) ignores the extent to which parties that firmly supported the state also acquiesced in the growing antisemitic tendency. Arendt goes on to argue that the antisemitic parties aimed 'to destroy the body politic of their own nation' (41). This analysis leaves little room for the virulent antisemitism of the *völkisch* movement, whose aim was to regenerate the body politic of their own nation, to heal the *Volkskörper* or national organism by eliminating the disease of Jewishness. A crucial axis of her argument revolves around a similar claim: 'Which group of people would turn antisemitic in a given country at a given historical moment depended exclusively upon general circumstances which made them ready for a violent antagonism to their government' (28). But many antisemites were neither violent nor antagonistic to their governments; indeed quite a few of them identified loyalty to their government with hostility to the Jews.[72]

The fundamental problems with Arendt's conception of antisemitism crystallize in the dichotomy between social Judaeophobia and political antisemitism that stands at the centre of her account.[73] Her third chapter, 'The Jews and Society', begins by claiming that Jews were simultaneously blind to the threat of political antisemitism and over-sensitive to social discrimination (54). Her argument is built around the assumption of a 'decisive difference between political argument and mere antipathy' (54). Arendt's formulation exaggerates the distinction and tends to obscure both of its poles. The very substance of antisemitism as a political argument was antipathy towards Jewishness, while the social manifestations of anti-Jewish affect went well beyond 'mere antipathy' to encompass profound revulsion and potent belligerence in myriad forms.[74]

Arendt argues that the two poles of her dichotomy 'grew out of exactly opposite aspects of emancipation: political antisemitism developed because the Jews were a separate body, while social discrimination arose because of the growing equality of Jews with all other groups' (54). Justifiable as such a distinction may be, this seems incoherent; the two named aspects are not opposites, even in the dialectical sense, and the second aspect is meaningless in the absence of the first: the very notion of an equality of Jews with other groups has no content unless Jews are themselves a distinct group. In any case, it was an underlying discomfort with the social recognition of Jews that gave rise to both 'political antisemitism' and 'social discrimination' in the first place, and it is not clear why these two closely related expressions of the same fundamental force ought to be understood as decisively different.

For Arendt, however, 'social resentment against the Jews' is 'politically sterile' (55). She insists that 'social antipathy for Jews' did not cause 'political harm'. Railing against the 'perversion of equality from a political into a social concept', she claims that 'it has been precisely this new concept of equality that has made modern race relations so difficult, for there we deal with natural differences which by no possible and conceivable change of conditions can become less conspicuous' (54). Whatever the dubious merits of introducing a notion of 'natural differences' into a discussion of 'race relations', the notion is inapplicable to Jewish-Gentile dynamics. Arendt's claim depends on a severe underestimation of the historical relevance of what she calls 'mere social antisemitism' (118). To the book's benefit, however, the distinction is not consistently maintained within her narrative; at times she acknowledges that 'social and economic hatred' had 'reinforced the political argument' of the antisemites (37), and concedes the possibility that political antisemitism may 'grow out of' social discrimination (55). At one point she locates the roots of Nazi antisemitism in both 'social conditions' and 'political circumstances', and rejects viewing 'the history of antisemitism' as a 'mere political movement'. In the wake of the Dreyfus affair, 'antisemitism appeared in Europe as an insoluble mixture of political motives and social elements' (87).

The social-political dichotomy nevertheless warps Arendt's analysis in significant ways. It prevents her from seeing that many antisemites were notably sceptical towards organized political antisemitism; it was not unusual for fervent antisemites to oppose the antisemitic political movement even in its heyday.[75] In addition, the divide between 'social discrimination' and 'political antisemitism' often serves to relegate the former to the status of a mere nuisance rather than a genuine threat, sometimes with surprising consequences, such as Arendt's suggestion that Carl Grattenauer's 1802 screed *Wider die Juden* (Against the Jews) was essentially harmless and in any event not an instance of antisemitism (61). The same myopia leads Arendt to trace modern antisemitism to 'political rather than economic causes' (28) and impairs her exposition of economic factors throughout the book. Thus the social-political dichotomy is one factor that makes her financial theory of the state's granting of gradual emancipation unpersuasive (11–12), bringing otherwise sympathetic commentators to reject it.[76] Similarly, Arendt's account of the interplay of 'useless wealth' and 'lack of power' (15) seems rudimentary when juxtaposed with more nuanced approaches that integrate political and economic dynamics; the narrowly political focus of Arendt's narrative limits its effectiveness, particularly in conjunction with her disavowal of psychoanalytic categories. These weaknesses can appear especially acute in comparison with other historical-philosophical analyses of antisemitism produced during the same period.[77]

## Possibilities and pitfalls of Arendt's framework

Despite its defects, Arendt's analysis displays several important strengths. Alongside her rejection of the thesis of antisemitism as eternal and inevitable, her thoroughly sceptical approach to scapegoat theories and her view of antisemitism as a historically specific phenomenon, readers of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* can appreciate her emphasis on the distinctive character of political antisemitism as a complement to the modern state, her prescient linking of antisemitism to colonialism, racism and imperialism, her early critique of left antisemitism and her insistence on taking Nazi antisemitism seriously as an object of study. Unpersuasive as the particulars may be, her efforts towards bringing broader philosophical and political themes to bear on the evolution of antisemitism deserve recognition. But the overall outlines of Arendt's historical interpretation of antisemitism leave many important features unaddressed and introduce significant distortions to those subjects that are examined in depth. In light of the complex tapestry of intertwined arguments that Arendt presents in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, these shortcomings may be considered relatively insubstantial, due to the perspicacity of much of the rest of the book, or fatal, due to the imbricated nature of the text as a whole, but it would be unwise to ignore them. Even where historically informed criticism is in order, readers could well conclude that her innovative insights outweigh her indefensible oversights.[78]

In either case, a scholarly analysis of the emergence of antisemitism or the development of European Jewish life that hopes to build on Arendt's account will have to undertake major revisions of her argument in order to render it usable for further research. The problem is not her focus on the 'Jewish question' as historically central to the predicament of the mid-twentieth century—Horkheimer and Adorno began from the same premise in their contrasting treatment—but the specific palette of presuppositions with which Arendt approaches the material. Attentive scrutiny is thus called for in order to disentangle the contradictions and potentials built in to her text, whether empirical errors arising from repeated reliance on antisemitic arguments that are then woven into her own, or theoretical failings attributable to the intricacies of her philosophical stance. It can also be worthwhile, albeit inevitably speculative, to consider possible reasons for the various misrepresentations and misconstruals that run throughout her text.

Although such questions require additional research, it may be fruitful to enquire into the extent to which Arendt's lopsided analysis of antisemitism in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* can be traced to her developing views on Zionism and the shifting currents within intra-Jewish discourse in the 1940s.[79] While some of the problematic nature of her analysis of assimilation, in particular, seems due to her heterodox but basically Zionist

orientation at the time, perhaps the unexpectedly harsh views of Jews in the book have to do with the controversies around her contemporaneous writings on Jewish topics and her increasing disillusionment with other Jews and their attitudes towards events in Palestine and the founding of Israel. In addition to her characteristically apodictic style, Arendt's own residual Zionist assumptions, paired with escalating animosity towards her now unwelcome critical standpoint, may partly explain the incongruous tone of her argument.

A further potentially significant factor stems from Arendt's rejection of psychoanalytic approaches. Scholars who immerse themselves in antisemitic materials in order to understand their internal logic are unavoidably exposed to a range of conflicting forces, from transference to projection to displacement, and facing these mechanisms reflectively can present a difficult challenge. Historians engaged in intensive study of antisemitic texts are often aware of these pitfalls, but Arendt may have deprived herself of effective ways to counter them because of her antagonism towards psychoanalytic thought. Whatever their origins, these dynamics merit reflection from Arendt's admirers and detractors alike.

Arendt's work shows it is possible to succumb to antisemitic assumptions even while arguing against their implications.[80] Rather than personal idiosyncrasies of Arendt's, we can see the drawbacks in her perspective as representative of broader trends in recent thinking on antisemitism and Jewish-Gentile relations. The propensity to view the history of antisemitism backwards through the distorting lens of the Holocaust is a constant temptation that paradoxically tends to absolve many historically potent varieties of antisemitism that were not themselves genocidal; this can make it easier to acquiesce unwittingly in forms of thought that were central to mainstream antisemitism for much of its history. At the same time, we can draw on Arendtian categories to envision what she did not: the positive possibility of collective solidarity and ethnic particularity conjoined with universalist and cosmopolitan values within the context of a reconciled social totality. Though it does not appear in her *magnum opus*, such a vision may have animated other aspects of Arendt's work.[81]

In the spirit of the best facets of Arendt's thought, then, her path-breaking account of antisemitism needs to be amended. Beyond the confines of her own writings, the deficiencies that mark Arendt's approach reflect familiar misconceptions that distort a range of popular perceptions regarding antisemitism. Yet it would be unreasonable to invoke these flaws in order to cast unwarranted doubt on Arendt's other achievements. Her wide-ranging work remains valuable and provocative in spite of the faults examined here, and its merits can withstand discerning inspection and critical revision. Attaining a better grasp of the complexities of emancipation, assimilation, exclusion and persecution, as well as providing a more compelling historical explanation of antisemitism, will demand that even those who hold Arendt in high regard incisively interrogate the interpretive framework bequeathed by *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.

## Acknowledgements

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* [1951], revd 3rd edn (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 1973), vii. This edition of the work was the last published during Arendt's lifetime. Subsequent references to it will be cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>2</sup>According to Margaret Canovan's by no means uncritical study *The Political Thought of Hannah Arendt* (London: Dent 1974), 27. Arendt's book remains a point of reference throughout the scholarly literature on antisemitism; noteworthy examples include Samuel Salzborn, *Antisemitismus als negative Leitidee der Moderne: Sozialwissenschaftliche Theorien im Vergleich* (Frankfurt-on-Main and New York: Campus

2010), 119–30; Steven Beller, *Antisemitism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press 2007), 120; Shulamit Volkov, *Germans, Jews, and Antisemites: Trials in Emancipation* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press 2006), 71–2; and Hermann Greive, *Geschichte des modernen Antisemitismus in Deutschland* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1988), 2–3, 58. The general German reception has been similar; Thomas Nipperdey's standard work, *Deutsche Geschichte 1866–1918*, 2 vols (Munich: Beck 1992), II, 923, cites Arendt's book specifically as a study of antisemitism. Arendt's admirers make stronger claims on behalf of the book. For Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, Arendt's analysis of antisemitism is 'historically the most rich and illuminating of any produced in response to the Holocaust'; Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, 'Hannah Arendt among feminists', in Larry May and Jerome Kohn (eds), *Hannah Arendt: Twenty Years Later* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 1996), 307–24 (319). See also George Kateb, *Hannah Arendt: Politics, Conscience, Evil* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Allanheld 1984), 58–61; Phillip Hansen, *Hannah Arendt: Politics, History and Citizenship* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 1993), 139–42; John McGowan, *Hannah Arendt: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1997), 20–2; and Julia Kristeva, *Hannah Arendt*, trans. from the French by Ross Guberman (New York: Columbia University Press 2001), 122–9.

<sup>3</sup>Bernard Wasserstein, 'Blame the victim: Hannah Arendt among the Nazis: the historian and her sources', *Times Literary Supplement*, 9 October 2009, 13–15.

<sup>4</sup>Shlomo Avineri, 'Where Hannah Arendt went wrong', *Haaretz*, 3 March 2010.

<sup>5</sup>A variety of perceptive studies along these lines are available, including Dagmar Barnouw, *Visible Spaces: Hannah Arendt and the German-Jewish Experience* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press 1990); Richard J. Bernstein, *Hannah Arendt and the Jewish Question* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 1996); Steven E. Aschheim (ed.), *Hannah Arendt in Jerusalem* (Berkeley: University of California Press 2001); Julia Schulze Wessel, *Ideologie der Sachlichkeit: Hannah Arendts politische Theorie des Antisemitismus* (Frankfurt-on-Main: Suhrkamp 2006); Leon Botstein, 'Liberating the pariah: politics, the Jews, and Hannah Arendt', *Salmagundi*, vol. 60, Spring 1983, 73–106; David Groiser, 'The origins of Hannah Arendt', *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 31, no. 4, 1997, 61–82; Joanna Vecchiarelli Scott, 'Hannah Arendt twenty years later: a German Jewess in the age of totalitarianism', *New German Critique*, vol. 86, Spring–Summer 2002, 19–42; and Seyla Benhabib and Raluca Eddon, 'From antisemitism to "the right to have rights": the Jewish roots of Hannah Arendt's cosmopolitanism', in Phyllis Lassner and Lara Trubowitz (eds), *Antisemitism and Philosemitism in the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries: Representing Jews, Jewishness, and Modern Culture* (Newark: University of Delaware Press 2008), 63–80. For a broad collection of relevant texts, see *Hannah Arendt, The Jewish Writings*, ed. Jerome Kohn and Ron H. Feldman (New York: Schocken Books 2007).

<sup>6</sup>Bernstein, *Hannah Arendt and the Jewish Question*, 50.

<sup>7</sup>Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World*, 2nd edn (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press 2004), 201. While this reticence is not always reflected in the bold tone of the text itself, there is nothing inherently wrong in assigning a subordinate role to historiographical concerns; the book can be read as first and foremost a work of political philosophy, not historical reconstruction.

<sup>8</sup>Hannah Arendt, 'A reply to Eric Voegelin' [1953], in *Hannah Arendt, Essays in Understanding, 1930–1954*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York and London: Harcourt, Brace and Co. 1994), 403. 'A comprehensive history of antisemitism', Arendt wrote in the preface to Part One of *Origins of Totalitarianism*, 'is beyond the scope of this book' (xv). See Dana Villa (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press 2001), 87–8; Leonard Krieger, 'The historical Hannah Arendt', *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 48, no. 4, 1976, 672–84; and Richard H. King, 'Arendt between past and future', in Richard H. King and Dan Stone (eds), *Hannah Arendt and the Uses of History: Imperialism, Nation, Race, and Genocide* (New York: Berghahn Books 2007), 250–61.

<sup>9</sup> *Hannah Arendt, Antisemitism: Part One of the Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 1968). The text and pagination are identical to the third edition of *Origins of Totalitarianism*. In the context of its original 1951 publication, contemporaneous points of comparison include Paul Massing, *Rehearsal for Destruction: A Study of Political Anti-Semitism in Imperial Germany* (New York: Harper

1949) and Eva G. Reichmann, *Hostages of Civilisation: A Study of the Social Causes of Anti-Semitism in Germany* (Boston: Beacon Press 1951).

<sup>10</sup>Steven E. Aschheim, *In Times of Crisis: Essays on European Culture, Germans, and Jews* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press 2001), 243.

<sup>11</sup>The extent of Frank's role within the text of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* is obscured by the remarkably incomplete entry in the index, which lists only four references to Frank in the entire book; there are in fact more than twice that number. References to Frank appear on pp. xiv, 21, 33, 95, 96, 97, 98, 100, 106, 339 and 402, including a half-dozen generally unproblematic citations from his various works and several explicitly affirmative characterizations; only two of the references are critical.

<sup>12</sup>Reinhard Rürup notes that Frank's *Forschungen zur Judenfrage*, on which Arendt draws repeatedly, 'operated on the basis of antisemitic theories'; Reinhard Rürup, *Emanzipation und Antisemitismus: Studien zur 'Judenfrage' der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht 1975), 121 (all translations, unless otherwise stated, are by the author). On Frank as an especially fanatical supporter of the Nazis, see Winfried Schulze and Otto Oexle (eds), *Deutsche Historiker im Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt-on-Main: Fischer Taschenbuch 1999), 23, 89, 95, 208. For further context, see the excellent treatment by Dirk Rupnow, 'Racializing historiography: anti-Jewish scholarship in the Third Reich', *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 42, no. 1, 2008, 27–59.

<sup>13</sup>The phrase 'the well-known historian Walter Frank' appears unaltered (and unaccompanied by quotation marks) in Young-Bruehl's biography (Hannah Arendt, 187). Frank took his own life the day after the capitulation of the Nazi regime.

<sup>14</sup>For context, see Michael Burleigh, *Germany Turns Eastwards: A Study of Ostforschung in the Third Reich* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press 1988), 132, 137; Karen Schönwälder, *Historiker und Politik: Geschichtswissenschaft im Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt-on-Main and New York: Campus 1992), 316; Hagen Schulze, 'Walter Frank', in Hans-Ulrich Wehler (ed.), *Deutsche Historiker*, vol. 7 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht 1980), 79; Joachim Lerchenmueller, *Die Geschichtswissenschaft in den Planungen des Sicherheitsdienstes der SS* (Bonn: Dietz 2001), 25–7, 70–2; and Patricia von Papen, 'Schützenhilfe nationalsozialistischer Judenpolitik: Die "Judenforschung" des "Reichsinstituts für Geschichte des neuen Deutschlands" 1935/1945', in Fritz-Bauer-Institut (ed.), 'Beseitigung des jüdischen Einflusses ...': Antisemitische Forschung, Eliten und Karrieren im Nationalsozialismus (Frankfurt-on-Main and New York: Campus 1999), 17–42.

<sup>15</sup>Frank had collaborated with Rosenberg extensively since the 1920s and, after 1933, Rosenberg was one of Frank's chief backers within the higher ranks of the regime. As late as 1941, just before their final estrangement, Frank acknowledged his debt to Rosenberg (and Julius Streicher) in print, while praising Rosenberg's works on the 'Jewish question'; see Walter Frank, 'Die Erforschung der Judenfrage: Rückblick und Ausblick', in Walter Frank (ed.), *Forschungen zur Judenfrage*, vol. 5 (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt 1941), 7–21 (8–10).

<sup>16</sup>Walter Frank, 'Deutsche Wissenschaft und Judenfrage', in Walter Frank (ed.), *Forschungen zur Judenfrage*, vol. 1 (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt 1937), 17, 31. See also Frank's earlier essays 'Der ewige Jude' and 'Wenn Israel nicht mehr König ist', in Walter Frank, *Geist und Macht: Historisch-politische Aufsätze* (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt 1938), a book dedicated to Erich Ludendorff. An important consideration in assessing Arendt's reliance on Frank's work concerns the question of how much of that work was available to her during the composition of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. In her 1955 preface to the German edition of the book, Arendt notes that a considerable number of publications from Nazi Germany were not accessible in American libraries at the time she was preparing the original manuscript; Hannah Arendt, *Elemente und Ursprünge totaler Herrschaft* (Frankfurt-on-Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt 1955), 15.

<sup>17</sup>Helmut Heiber, *Walter Frank und sein Reichsinstitut für Geschichte des neuen Deutschlands* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt 1966). See also the thorough review of Heiber's book by Rudolf Vierhaus, 'Walter Frank und die Geschichtswissenschaft im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland', *Historische Zeitschrift*, vol. 207, 1968, 617–27.

- <sup>18</sup>See, for example, Heiber, *Walter Frank und sein Reichsinstitut für Geschichte des neuen Deutschlands*, 349–51.
- <sup>19</sup>See, for example, Heiber, *Walter Frank und sein Reichsinstitut für Geschichte des neuen Deutschlands*, 350.
- <sup>20</sup>See, for example, Heiber, *Walter Frank und sein Reichsinstitut für Geschichte des neuen Deutschlands*, 458–62.
- <sup>21</sup>Once again, this reference to Paulus does not appear in the book's index. See also the quotations from Paulus in Hannah Arendt, 'The moral of history' [1946], in Hannah Arendt, *The Jew as Pariah: Jewish Identity and Politics in the Modern Age* (New York: Grove Press 1978), 106–10 (now reprinted in Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 312–16).
- <sup>22</sup>Heinrich Paulus, *Die jüdische Nationalabsonderung nach Ursprung, Folgen, und Besserungsmitteln* (Heidelberg: C. F. Winter 1831).
- <sup>23</sup>In the German edition of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Arendt cites an earlier text by Paulus in support of this claim; see Arendt, *Elemente und Ursprünge totaler Herrschaft*, 143.
- <sup>24</sup>Gotthard Deutsch, 'Anti-Semitism', in Cyrus Adler and Isidore Singer et al. (eds), *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, 12 vols (New York and London: Funk and Wagnalls 1901–6), I, 641–9 (643).
- <sup>25</sup>Entry on 'Antisemitismus', in *DTV-Lexikon in 20 Bänden* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch-Verlag 1990), I, 220; the other listed figures are Dühring, Lagarde, Langbehn and Drumont.
- <sup>26</sup>Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto: The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation, 1770–1870* (New York: Schocken Books 1978), 199. Katz is one of two historians of modern Jewry whose work Arendt commends in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (xii); the other is her friend Salo Baron.
- <sup>27</sup>Rürup, *Emanzipation und Antisemitismus*, 50.
- <sup>28</sup>Jonathan M. Hess, *Germans, Jews and the Claims of Modernity* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press 2002), 189.
- <sup>29</sup>Alfred D. Low, *Jews in the Eyes of the Germans: From the Enlightenment to Imperial Germany* (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues 1979), 112. Low discusses *Die jüdische Nationalabsonderung nach Ursprung, Folgen, und Besserungsmitteln* on 245–6.
- <sup>30</sup>Jacob Katz, *Emancipation and Assimilation: Studies in Modern Jewish History* (Farnborough, Hampshire: Gregg 1972), 39. Katz explains that, for Paulus, 'liberal principles were inapplicable to Jews since they had isolated themselves from the general society by their adherence to their own religion and traditions' (67).
- <sup>31</sup>Rainer Erb and Werner Bergmann, *Die Nachtseite der Judenemanzipation: Der Widerstand gegen die Integration der Juden in Deutschland 1780–1860* (Berlin: Metropol 1989), 202–3.
- <sup>32</sup>Riesser's rejoinder to Paulus is a fine counter-argument to Arendt's claim that prominent Jews defended only their own interests rather than those of Jewry as such; see Gabriel Riesser, *Vertheidigung der bürgerlichen Gleichstellung der Juden gegen die Einwürfe des Herrn Dr. Paulus* (Altona: J. F. Hammerich 1831). For background, see Moshe Rinott, 'Gabriel Riesser: fighter for emancipation', *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1962, 11–38.
- <sup>33</sup>On the influence of this trope and Paulus's role in promoting it, see Nicoline Hartzitz, 'Früh-Antisemitismus' in Deutschland (1789–1871/72): Strukturelle Untersuchungen zu Wortschatz, Text und Argumentation (Tübingen: Niemeyer 1988), 148–50, 184–6, also 325–6 for extensive excerpts from *Die jüdische Nationalabsonderung nach Ursprung, Folgen, und Besserungsmitteln*.
- <sup>34</sup>For an insightful discussion of Paulus's argument, see Eleonore Sterling's section 'Der Vorwurf der jüdischen "Nationalabsonderung"', in Eleonore Sterling, *Judenhaß: Die Anfänge des politischen Antisemitismus in Deutschland (1815–1850)* (Frankfurt-on-Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt 1969), 81–3. Paulus accorded the Jews 'only the subordinate status of "Schutzbürgern" and led an illiberal struggle against their general emancipation'; Wolfgang Schenk, 'Paulus, Heinrich Eberhard Gottlob', in Traugott Bautz (ed.), *Biographisch-bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, vol. 7 (Herzberg: Traugott Bautz 1994), 96.
- <sup>35</sup>Erb and Bergmann, *Die Nachtseite der Judenemanzipation*, 57.
- <sup>36</sup>For a detailed analysis of the role of Paulus's treatise in the debates of the Baden Reformlandtag of 1831, see Rürup, *Emanzipation und Antisemitismus*, 56–9, 152–3; for Paulus's influence on liberal opponents of emancipation, see Reinhard Rürup, 'German liberalism and the emancipation of the Jews', *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, vol. 20, no. 1, 1975, 59–68 (62–3).

- <sup>37</sup>Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism, 1700–1933* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1980), particularly 155–8. Katz provides extensive quotes from *Die jüdische Nationalabsonderung nach Ursprung, Folgen, und Besserungsmitteln*, and his summary runs directly contrary to Arendt's.
- <sup>38</sup>Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism, 1700–1933* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1980), particularly 155–8. Katz provides extensive quotes from *Die jüdische Nationalabsonderung nach Ursprung, Folgen, und Besserungsmitteln*, and his summary runs directly contrary to Arendt's, 155, 179, 239.
- <sup>39</sup>Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism, 1700–1933*, 156, 179, 157.
- <sup>40</sup>Arendt adopts arguments from Nazi disquisitions on the 'Jewish question' in order to reinforce her own historical assertions at other points in the book as well; see, for example, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 202, 204. In another instance she endorses a passage about Jews by Édouard Drumont that confirms her account (98).
- <sup>41</sup>For critical context on these unsustainable claims, see Peter Pulzer, *Jews and the German State: The Political History of a Minority, 1848–1933* (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell 1992); Werner Mosse, *Jews in the German Economy: The German-Jewish Economic Elite, 1820–1935* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press 1987); Selma Stern, *The Court Jew: A Contribution to the History of the Period of Absolutism in Central Europe* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society 1950); and Marion A. Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family, and Identity in Imperial Germany* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press 1991).
- <sup>42</sup>See Ismar Schorsch, *Jewish Reactions to German Anti-Semitism, 1870–1914* (New York: Columbia University Press 1972), 58–9, and Sanford Ragins, *Jewish Responses to Anti-Semitism in Germany 1870–1914: A Study in the History of Ideas* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press 1980), 31–2: both offer accounts of Bleichröder's actions on this same occasion that are diametrically opposed to Arendt's credulous claims, which are based entirely on testimony from Bismarck and his son in private correspondence as presented by Walter Frank in his biography of Stöcker. This relatively unimportant episode indicates the extent of Arendt's trusting use of antisemitic sources and the harmful historiographical consequences of this practice.
- <sup>43</sup>See Massing, *Rehearsal for Destruction*, 41–3, 223–4, and Peter Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria* (New York: Wiley 1964), 92–4.
- <sup>44</sup>Fritz Stern, *Gold and Iron: Bismarck, Bleichröder, and the Building of the German Empire* (New York: Knopf 1977), 496: 'Through it all, Bleichröder remained a Jew. He continued to intercede for his coreligionists at home and abroad.'
- <sup>45</sup>David Blackbourn, *The Long Nineteenth Century: A History of Germany, 1780–1918* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press 1998), 334. See also Lamar Cecil, 'Wilhelm II und die Juden', in Werner Mosse (ed.), *Juden im wilhelminischen Deutschland, 1890–1914* (Tübingen: Mohr 1976), 313–47, and John Röhl, 'Kaiser Wilhelm II. und der deutsche Antisemitismus', in John C. G. Röhl, *Kaiser, Hof und Staat: Wilhelm II. und die deutsche Politik* (Munich: Beck 2007), 203–22.
- <sup>46</sup>Hannah Arendt, 'One does not escape Jewishness', in Hannah Arendt, *Rahel Varnhagen: The Life of a Jewess*, ed. Liliane Weissberg, trans. from the German by Richard and Clara Winston (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press 1997), 256. Arendt here appears to endorse the notion of eternal antisemitism that she forcefully criticizes in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Elsewhere in the Varnhagen study she invokes a very different conception of assimilation, one that does not revolve around 'the disappearance of the Jews into non-Jewish society' (179). Arendt's admirers sometimes seem to hold that commitment to Jewish identity is simply incompatible with assimilation, attributing this belief to Arendt herself; see, for example, Suzanne Vromen, 'Jewish to the core', in Roger Berkowitz, Jeffrey Katz and Thomas Keenan (eds), *Thinking in Dark Times: Hannah Arendt on Ethics and Politics* (New York: Fordham University Press 2010), 213–17.
- <sup>47</sup>Uriel Tal, *Christians and Jews in Germany: Religion, Politics, and Ideology in the Second Reich, 1870–1914* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 1975), 220.



- <sup>48</sup>See the comprehensive study by Avraham Barkai, 'Wehr dich!': Der Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens (C.V.) 1893–1938 (Munich: Beck 2002). Jehuda Reinharz's earlier comparative study of assimilationist and Zionist organizations noted that the assimilationist Centralverein 'expressed the attitudes and beliefs of most German Jews'; Jehuda Reinharz, *Fatherland or Promised Land: The Dilemma of the German Jew, 1893–1914* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1975), 37.
- <sup>49</sup>Michael Marrus, 'European Jewry and the politics of assimilation', in Bela Vago (ed.), *Jewish Assimilation in Modern Times* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press 1981), 13.
- <sup>50</sup>Reinharz, *Fatherland or Promised Land*, 229.
- <sup>51</sup>Reinharz, *Fatherland or Promised Land*, 61.
- <sup>52</sup>Compare the passage on 74 in which Arendt equates 'Jewish assimilation' with 'liquidation of national consciousness' to the passage on 84 in which she argues against the notion that assimilated Jewry was 'dejudaized' and insists instead that assimilated Jews were 'obsessed' with Jewishness. For divergent views on this contested topic, see David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780–1840* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press 1987); George L. Mosse, *Germans and Jews: The Right, the Left, and the Search for a 'Third Force' in pre-Nazi Germany* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press 1987); George L. Mosse, *German Jews beyond Judaism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1985); Paul Mendes-Flohr, *German Jews: A Dual Identity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 1999); Amos Elon, *The Pity of It All: A History of the Jews in Germany, 1743–1933* (New York: Holt 2002); Enzo Traverso, *The Jews and Germany: From the 'Judeo-German Symbiosis' to the Memory of Auschwitz*, trans. from the French by Daniel Weissbord (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press 1995); and Michael Brenner and Derek J. Penslar (eds), *In Search of Jewish Community: Jewish Identities in Germany and Austria, 1918–1933* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1998).
- <sup>53</sup>The allusion to Paulus is not incidental to her argument. Arendt explains that the 'doors of society' were open only to Jews who relinquished their Jewishness, but she immediately introduces an apparent limitation on this condition, applying it solely to those Jews who 'desired this kind of intercourse', thus conflating her own markedly negative conception of 'society' with society as such. No individual merely 'desires' to be part of society, as if there were some other option available, and the entry of Jews into European society in the wake of emancipation did not at the time carry any of the opprobrium that the term 'society' signifies in Arendt's political theory. Arendt moreover never substantiates her notion that social isolation was the result of emancipation. Much of this problematic reasoning can be traced to Paulus.
- <sup>54</sup>For background, see Dieter Langewiesche, *Liberalism in Germany*, trans. from the German by Christiane Banerji (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 2000), 13, 77; Reinhard Rürup, 'Emanzipationsgeschichte und Antisemitismusforschung', in Rainer Erb and Michael Schmidt (eds), *Antisemitismus und jüdische Geschichte* (Berlin: Wissenschaftlicher Autorenverlag 1987), 467–78; Reinhard Rürup, 'Emanzipation und Antisemitismus: Historische Verbindungslinien', in Herbert Strauss and Norbert Kampe (eds), *Antisemitismus: Von der Judenfeindschaft zum Holocaust* (Frankfurt-on-Main: Campus 1985), 88–98; Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson (eds), *Paths of Emancipation: Jews, States, and Citizenship* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1995); Hans-Joachim Salecker, *Der Liberalismus und die Erfahrung der Differenz: Über die Bedingungen der Integration der Juden in Deutschland* (Bodenheim: Philo 1999); and Marcel Stoetzler, *The State, the Nation, and the Jews: Liberalism and the Antisemitism Dispute in Bismarck's Germany* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press 2008).
- <sup>55</sup>Thus Arendt characterizes Herder as 'an outspoken friend of the Jews', but in the next paragraph accurately describes his aim as the 'emancipation of the Jews from Judaism', and quotes him explaining that the Jews need to be 'humanized'; she goes on to analyse this stance as a sign of 'exaggerated good will' (57–8).
- <sup>58</sup>Tal, *Christians and Jews in Germany*, 58. Tal's book examines 'the double aspiration of the Jews in the Second Reich to integrate into the dominant society and at the same time retain their Jewish identity. This endeavor on the part of German Jews was part of a larger struggle of men to achieve freedom in modern society without forfeiting individuality.' But, as Tal notes, 'this twofold aspiration of German Jewry did not meet with approval' (290).

- <sup>56</sup>In other works Arendt herself acknowledged this, remarking that Gentile critics of the Jews were unaware that the goal of Jewish assimilationists was Jewish survival; see Hannah Arendt, 'Zionism reconsidered' [1944], in Arendt, *The Jew as Pariah*, 131–63, and Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 343–74.
- <sup>57</sup>Michael Meyer, 'German Jewry's path to normality and assimilation', in Rainer Liedtke and David Rechter (eds), *Towards Normality? Acculturation and Modern German Jewry* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2003), 25.
- <sup>59</sup>Tal, *Christians and Jews in Germany*, 63–78. Tal emphasizes 'the desire of German Jewry to retain its identity' (163) and its consistent efforts in this direction, despite intense opposition from Gentiles of virtually every political stripe; indeed, according to Tal, 'it was precisely the educated and emancipated Jews who ... insisted on remaining Jews' (163). He describes German Jewry's 'determined effort to integrate into the dominant society while retaining its identity' (295), and throughout the book he highlights 'the insistence of German Jewry on retaining its identity' (296). 'German Jews, like most of the Jews in the West, pursued a double aim—to integrate completely into their environment as full-fledged Germans and at the same time preserve their separate Jewish existence' (17).
- <sup>60</sup>Low, *Jews in the Eyes of the Germans*, 412.
- <sup>61</sup>Low, *Jews in the Eyes of the Germans*, 413. See also Beller, *Antisemitism*, 32–9; Marion A. Kaplan, 'Tradition and transition: the acculturation, assimilation and integration of Jews in Imperial Germany', *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, vol. 27, no. 1, 1982, 3–35; and Donald Niewyk, *The Jews in Weimar Germany* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press 1980), particularly ch. 5, 'The Jew as German liberal: the search for an assimilationist identity'.
- <sup>62</sup>Christian Wiese, *Challenging Colonial Discourse: Jewish Studies and Protestant Theology in Wilhelmine Germany* (Leiden: Brill 2005); Sharon Gillerman, *Germans into Jews: Remaking the Jewish Social Body in the Weimar Republic* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 2009). David Sorkin has further examined this fundamental divide between contrary understandings of 'assimilation'; David Sorkin, 'Emancipation and assimilation: two concepts and their application to German-Jewish history', *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, vol. 35, no. 1, 1990, 17–33. Sorkin distinguishes between 'broad' and 'narrow' conceptions of assimilation, the first shared by those non-Jews whom Sorkin labels 'illiberal Liberals' and the second shared by liberal and pro-assimilationist Jews. Using terms that were current in the nineteenth century, Sorkin notes that the broad conception of assimilation 'assumed that "Amalgamierung" and "Verschmelzung" meant the disappearance of the Jews through conversion' (20). In contrast, the narrow conception promoted by Jewish reformers explicitly rejected the disappearance of the Jews as such. Sorkin concludes: 'The more scholars excavate the complex layers of the process of integration, the less adequate will an undifferentiated concept of assimilation appear' (30).
- <sup>63</sup>See Ismar Elbogen and Eleonore Sterling, *Die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland* (Frankfurt-on-Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt 1966), 204–6; Kerstin Meiring, *Die christlich-jüdische Mischehe in Deutschland 1840–1933* (Hamburg: Dölling und Galitz 1998); Elisheva Carlebach, *Divided Souls: Converts from Judaism in Germany, 1500–1750* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 2001); Deborah Hertz, *How Jews Became Germans: The History of Conversion and Assimilation in Berlin* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 2007); and Till van Rahden, *Jews and other Germans: Civil Society, Religious Diversity and Urban Politics in Breslau, 1860–1925* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press 2008). For a detailed statistical analysis emphasizing regional and chronological variation, see the section on 'Taufen, Mischehen, Austritte' in Jacob Toury, *Soziale und politische Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland, 1847–1871* (Düsseldorf: Droste 1977), 51–68.
- <sup>64</sup>The idea that Jews have some special inclination towards separateness is a longstanding antisemitic canard; it is indeed 'well known' in the sense of being widely believed, but it is nevertheless historically and sociologically false. To choose an obvious counter-example to Arendt's claim about Jews 'alone among all other groups', a 'principle of separation' animated many schismatic and heretical tendencies within Christianity itself, including millenarian sects and communal societies, not to mention mainstream monastic orders.
- <sup>65</sup>This ambivalent double-bind is hardly unique to Arendt. On the 'polemical concept of "assimilation"' as a 'partisan notion [that] was so inherently polarizing, encouraging either censure or celebration, that it

virtually precluded sober analysis', see David Sorkin, 'The émigré synthesis: German-Jewish history in modern times', *Central European History*, vol. 34, no. 4, 2001, 531–59 (532–3). See also Shulamit Volkov's critical discussion of Arendt's treatment of assimilation in Volkov, *Germans, Jews, and Antisemites*, 165–9.

- <sup>66</sup>This claim suggests a remarkable failure of comparative reasoning. Arendt has overlooked the Roma, the Basques, the Slovenes, the Albanians and quite a few others, not to mention more obvious if more restricted instances such as the Poles or the Flemings or Walloons, all in order to underscore Jewish peculiarity.
- <sup>67</sup>Albert Lindemann's *Esau's Tears: Modern Anti-Semitism and the Rise of the Jews* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press 1997) is a recent and more thorough, if equally problematic, attempt to develop a similar analysis. For fruitful comparison in a very different historical context, see David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1996).
- <sup>68</sup>For rebuttals to Arendt's claim from a wide variety of perspectives, see David Biale, *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History: The Jewish Tradition and the Myth of Passivity* (New York: Schocken Books 1986); Eli Lederhendler, *The Road to Modern Jewish Politics: Political Tradition and Political Reconstruction in the Jewish Community of Tsarist Russia* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press 1989); Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *The Jews: History, Memory, and the Present*, ed. and trans. from the French by David Ames Curtis (New York: Columbia University Press 1996); David Vital, *A People Apart: The Jews in Europe 1789–1939* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press 1999); Ismar Schorsch, 'On the history of the political judgment of the Jew', in Ismar Schorsch, *From Text to Context: The Turn to History in Modern Judaism* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press/Hanover, NH: University Press of New England 1994), 118–32; Howard Sachar, *The Course of Modern Jewish History* (Cleveland, OH: World Publishing 1958); and the anthology edited by Daniel J. Elazar, *Kinship and Consent: The Jewish Political Tradition and its Contemporary Uses*, 2nd edn (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction 1997).
- <sup>69</sup>Arendt goes on to characterize these scheming interlopers as 'newly naturalized French Jews over whom their native-born brethren had lost control in much the same way as occurred in the Germany of the inflation period' (99).
- <sup>70</sup>These 'Jewish financiers' were furthermore marked by 'unscrupulousness' and 'rootlessness' (202). On 'the fateful association of Jews with banking' and the historically suspect nature of this idea, see George Lichtheim, 'Socialism and the Jews', in George Lichtheim, *Thoughts among the Ruins: Collected Essays on Europe and Beyond* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction 1973), 421.
- <sup>71</sup>A number of these claims centre on the notion of 'Jewish chosenness' (e.g. 241), towards which Arendt takes a contradictory stance: on the one hand, she sees the idea of a chosen people as pointing towards 'an ultimate realization of the ideal of a common humanity' (243), but she simultaneously holds this very ideal against those Jews who in her eyes failed to live up to it. In addition, Arendt sometimes treats the notion of chosenness as a Jewish peculiarity, rather than examining whether it may constitute an element in various creation myths and foundational narratives across a range of peoples and cultures, whether 'primitive' or 'ancient' or 'modern'.
- <sup>72</sup>For a perceptive analysis in a more comprehensive context, see Marcel Stoetzler, 'Anti-Semitism, the bourgeoisie, and the self-destruction of the nation-state', in King and Stone (eds), *Hannah Arendt and the Uses of History*, 130–46.
- <sup>73</sup>There are a number of compelling historiographical reasons for drawing some distinction of this sort, particularly in analyses that, like Arendt's, cover a range of historical periods and multiple cultural contexts. The specific versions Arendt espouses, however, have been widely questioned. For an argument against separating political and social antisemitism, see Shulamit Volkov, 'Antisemitism as a cultural code: reflections on the history and historiography of antisemitism in imperial Germany', *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, vol. 23, no. 1, 1978, 25–46, and, for a critical examination of strict distinctions between traditional religious anti-Judaism and modern antisemitism, see Johannes Heil, "'Antijudaismus" und "Antisemitismus": Begriffe als Bedeutungsträger', *Jahrbuch für*

Antisemitismusforschung, vol. 6, 1997, 92–114. Based on a partial reconstruction of Arendt's shifting views in the course of the 1940s, Julia Schulze Wessel and Lars Rensmann have argued that Arendt changed her mind on the relation between religious anti-Judaism and political antisemitism while writing *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. According to their account, this shift was prompted when Arendt learned of the extermination camps and the scope of the Nazi genocide of European Jewry; they report that Arendt had previously emphasized the continuities between anti-Judaism and antisemitism in an earlier unpublished manuscript now in the Hannah Arendt Archiv, Oldenburg. See Julia Schulze Wessel and Lars Rensmann, 'Radikalisierung oder "Verschwinden" der Judenfeindschaft? Arendts und Adornos Theorien zum modernen Antisemitismus', in Dirk Auer, Lars Rensmann and Julia Schulze Wessel (eds), *Arendt und Adorno* (Frankfurt-on-Main: Suhrkamp 2003), 97.

<sup>74</sup>Even the rhetoric of 'antipathy' is misplaced. See T. W. Adorno, Else-Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel J. Levinson, R. Nevitt Sanford et al., *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Harper 1950), 92: 'anti-Semitism is best conceived psychologically not as a specific aversion but as an ideology, a general way of thinking about Jews and Jewish-Gentile interaction'. See also Shulamit Volkov's distinction between 'anti-Semitism as an animus' and 'anti-Semitism as an ideology', in Shulamith Volkov, 'Anti-Semitism as explanation: for and against', in Moishe Postone and Eric Santner (eds), *Catastrophe and Meaning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2003), 34–48. For critical appraisals of Arendt's conception of the social, see Richard J. Bernstein, 'Rethinking the social and the political', in Richard J. Bernstein, *Philosophical Profiles: Essays in a Pragmatic Mode* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1986), 238–59; Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *The Attack of the Blob: Hannah Arendt's Concept of the Social* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1998); Seyla Benhabib, 'The social and the political: an untenable divide', in Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield 2003), 138–66; and, for a provocatively heterodox reading, cf. Gillian Rose, *The Broken Middle: Out of Our Ancient Society* (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell 1992), 216–38.

<sup>75</sup>For examples, see Donald Niewyk, 'Solving the "Jewish problem": continuity and change in German antisemitism, 1871–1945', *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, vol. 35, no. 1, 1990, 335–70.

<sup>76</sup>Of the financial role of court Jews and the 'investment of Jewish capital in the state', Arendt writes: 'Without their assistance the eighteenth-century development of the nation-state and its independent civil service would have been inconceivable' (98). For an account of the fiscal evolution of the modern state that is directly contrary to Arendt's emphasis on court Jews and later Jewish financiers, see Arthur Hertzberg, *The French Enlightenment and the Jews: The Origins of Modern Anti-Semitism* (New York: Columbia University Press 1968), especially his thoughtful appreciation and critique of Arendt's analysis of antisemitism (6–7). Hertzberg's book devotes detailed attention to the themes of money-lending, banking and the formation of the state, and argues that in the French case 'Jews played no role of any consequence' in state finance in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (6). See Marcus Arkin, *Aspects of Jewish Economic History* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America 1975); Hillel Levine, *Economic Origins of Antisemitism: Poland and Its Jews in the Early Modern Period* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 1991); Jonathan Karp, *The Politics of Jewish Commerce: Economic Thought and Emancipation in Europe, 1638–1848* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press 2008); Jerry Z. Muller, *Capitalism and the Jews* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 2010); Bernard Weinryb, 'The economic and social background of modern antisemitism', in Koppel S. Pinson (ed.), *Essays on Antisemitism* (New York: Conference on Jewish Relations 1942), 145–66; Werner J. Cahnman, 'Socio-economic causes of antisemitism', *Social Problems*, vol. 5, no. 1, 1957, 21–9; Moishe Postone, 'Anti-Semitism and National Socialism: notes on the German reaction to "Holocaust"', *New German Critique*, vol. 19, 1980, 97–115; and R. Po-chia Hsia, 'The usurious Jew: economic structure and religious representations in an anti-Semitic discourse', in R. Po-chia Hsia and Hartmut Lehmann (eds), *In and Out of the Ghetto: Jewish-Gentile Relations in Late Medieval and Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press 1995), 161–76.

<sup>77</sup>The classic contrast is the chapter 'Elements of Antisemitism' in Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno's 1944 work, published later in English as *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, an analysis that combines detailed

attention to the political, economic, religious, anthropological and psychological roots of antisemitism. This multifactorial approach yields conclusions that sometimes diverge starkly from central aspects of Arendt's account, for instance her treatment of the relation between antisemitic images and actual Jewish behaviour, which in Horkheimer and Adorno's interpretation is strongly informed by psychoanalytic insights in order to illuminate the tangled subjective origins of the antisemitic mindset. See also Detlev Claussen, *Grenzen der Aufklärung: Die gesellschaftliche Genese des modernen Antisemitismus* (Frankfurt: Fischer 1987) and Seyla Benhabib, 'From "The Dialectic of Enlightenment" to "The Origins of Totalitarianism" and the Genocide Convention: Adorno and Horkheimer in the company of Arendt and Lemkin', in Warren Breckman, Peter E. Gordon, A. Dirk Moses, Samuel Moyn and Elliot Neaman (eds), *The Modernist Imagination: Intellectual History and Critical Theory* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books 2009), 299–328.

<sup>78</sup>It may be appropriate, for instance, to emphasize the positive and historically perceptive aspects of Arendt's insistence on taking account of Jews' own agency, their specific responses to the social environment, and how these responses (or lack of response) shaped the treatment of Jews by others. To criticize the manner in which such an approach is carried out is not to reject the endeavour as such.

<sup>79</sup>Steven Aschheim observes that Arendt's 'historiography of modern Jewish life and anti-Semitism was laden with Zionist assumptions' (Aschheim, *In Times of Crisis*, 75). See also McGowan, *Hannah Arendt*, 4–5, and Iris Pilling, *Denken und Handeln als Jüdin: Hannah Arendts politische Theorie vor 1950* (Frankfurt-on-Main and New York: Lang 1996).

<sup>80</sup>Arendt's book is itself on guard against an 'indirectly antisemitic interpretation' (100).

<sup>81</sup>See, for example, her 1944 essay, 'The Jew as pariah: a hidden tradition', honouring 'those bold spirits who tried to make of the emancipation of the Jews that which it really should have been—an admission of Jews as Jews to the ranks of humanity' (Arendt, *The Jew as Pariah*, 68; Arendt, *The Jewish Writings*, 275).