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ANTISEMITISM AND RACISM

Jews, Liberalism, Antisemitism

A Global History

Edited by
Abigail Green · Simon Levis Sullam

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Palgrave Critical Studies of Antisemitism
and Racism

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Editors

Abigail Green
Brasenose College
University of Oxford
Oxford, UK

Simon Levis Sullam
Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici
Ca' Foscari University of Venice
Venice, Italy

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For Peter Pulzer

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Abigail Green
Simon Levis Sullam

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Julia Phillips Cohen is Associate Professor of Jewish Studies and History at Vanderbilt University. She has authored two award-winning books, *Becoming Ottomans: Sephardi Jews and Imperial Citizenship in the Modern Era* (Oxford, 2014), and *Sephardi Lives: A Documentary History, 1700–1950* (Stanford, 2014).

Arie M. Dubnov teaches at the George Washington University. His publications include *Isaiah Berlin: The Journey of a Jewish Liberal* (2012), *Zionism: A View from the Outside* (2010), and *Partitions: A Transnational History of Twentieth-century Territorial Separatism* (2019, co-edited with Laura Robson).

Michal Rose Friedman (Ph.D. Columbia University, 2012) is the Jack Buncher Endowed Chair in Jewish Studies at Carnegie Mellon University. Her research focuses on the intersection of modern Iberian and Jewish history. She is the author of articles in journals such as *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, *Jewish Social Studies*, and the *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*.

Abigail Green is Professor of Modern European History at the University of Oxford, and a Fellow of Brasenose College. She is the author of *Fatherlands: State-building and nationhood in 19th century Germany* (2001), and *Moses Montefiore: Jewish Liberator, Imperial Hero* (2010). She is now leading a collaborative project on Jewish Country houses.

Malachi Haim Hacohen is Professor of History, Political Science and Religion at Duke University. Author of *Karl Popper. The Formative Years, 1902–1945: Politics and Philosophy in Interwar Vienna* (Cambridge, 2000)

and *Jacob & Esau: Jewish European History Between Nation and Empire* (Cambridge, 2019), as well as essays on the Central European Jewish intelligentsia.

Ari Joskowicz is Associate Professor of Jewish Studies and director of the Max Kade Center for European and German Studies at Vanderbilt University. He is currently writing a book on the relation between Jews and Roma during the Holocaust and in memory and archival politics since 1945.

Jonathan Kwan is Lecturer in Modern History at the University of Nottingham. Publications include *Liberalism and the Habsburg Monarchy, 1861–1895* (Basingstoke, 2013) and articles on the 1867 Compromise, Bohemia, Transylvania and Viennese Jews. At present he is researching the life of Napoleon III and editing a book on the Austro-Hungarian Compromise.

Lisa Moses Leff is Professor of History at American University whose research focuses on Jews in France. Her books include *The Archive Thief: The Man Who Salvaged French Jewish History in the Wake of the Holocaust* and *Sacred Bonds of Solidarity: The Rise of Jewish Internationalism in Nineteenth Century France*.

Laura Arnold Leibman is Professor of English and Humanities at Reed College in Portland, Oregon (USA). She is the author of the award-winning *Messianism, Secrecy and Mysticism: A New Interpretation of Early American Jewish Life* (London, 2012) and of *The Art of the Jewish Family* (New York, 2020).

Luisa Levi D’Ancona Modena (Ph.D., Cambridge University 2004) is an Italian historian, living in Jerusalem where she is currently a Research Fellow at the European Forum, Hebrew University. She has taught, published and researched in Italy, Israel and England, most recently as a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the University of Oxford. Her areas of interest are: Jews in Liberal Italy, Jewish philanthropy, women and civil society, Jewish secularism and ego-writing.

Simon Levis Sullam is Associate Professor of Modern History at Ca’ Foscari University of Venice. Among his books: *Toleration within Judaism* (with Martin Goodman and others, Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2013); *Giuseppe Mazzini and the Origins of Fascism* (Palgrave, 2015), *The Italian Executioners. The Genocide of the Jews of Italy, 1943–1945* (Princeton University Press, 2018).

James Loeffler is Jay Berkowitz Professor of Jewish History at the University of Virginia. His books include *Rooted Cosmopolitans: Jews and Human Rights in the Twentieth Century* (2018), *The Law of Strangers: Jewish Lawyers and International Law in the Twentieth Century* (2019), and *The Most Musical Nation: Jews and Culture in the Late Russian Empire* (2010).

Samuel Moyn is Henry R. Luce Professor of Jurisprudence at Yale Law School and a Professor of History at Yale University. He has written several books in his fields of European intellectual history and human rights history, including *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (2010).

Ozan Ozavci is Assistant Professor of History at Utrecht University. His research specialisms are in the transimperial histories of security, violence and ideologies in the long nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He is currently finalising his second monograph titled *Dangerous Gifts: Imperialism, Security, and Civil Wars in the Levant, 1798–1864* (Oxford UP, forthcoming).

M. M. Silver is Professor of Modern Jewish History at the Max Stern College of Emek Yezreel. He is the author of books and articles in Hebrew and English on American Jewish History, Zionism, Jewish Literature. He received his Ph.D. in Modern Jewish History from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and lives in Galilee.

Yaron Tsur Emeritus Professor in the Department of Jewish History at Tel Aviv University, specialises in the Jews in Muslim Lands and the ethnic problem in Israel. Among his books: *A Torn Community: The Jews of Morocco and Nationalism, 1943–1954* (Tel-Aviv, 2001); *Notables and Other Jews in the Ottoman Middle-East 1750–1830* (Jerusalem, 2016; English translation forthcoming).

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Jews, Liberalism, Antisemitism: Towards a Twenty-First-Century History

Abigail Green and Simon Levis Sullam

GLOBALIZING THE DIALECTICS OF INCLUSION

Some have identified the figure of the Jew navigating the perils and contradictions of modernity with the character of Odysseus in Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno's *Dialectics of Enlightenment*.¹ Writing as the Holocaust was reaching its abyss on the old continent, these two émigré philosophers of Jewish or partly Jewish descent described what they saw as the dialectical process inherent to the Enlightenment: a process that produced not just progress and human advancement, but also – as an originary contradiction – the instrumental use of reason, violence, hatred

¹ Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*; Rabinbach, “Why Were the Jews Sacrificed?,” 49–64; Porter, “Odysseus and the Wandering Jew,” 200–13.

A. Green (✉)

Brasenose College, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK

e-mail: abigail.green@bnc.ox.ac.uk

S. Levis Sullam

Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici, Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Venice, Italy

e-mail: levissmn@unive.it

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and antisemitism then reaching its pinnacle in mass extermination. Forty years later, Amos Funkenstein described both Jewish assimilation and self-assertion as “truly *dialectical* processes.” His influential article attacked the concept of assimilation as an ideological construct deployed in Jewish historiography to demonize the experience of social, cultural and political integration.² Taken together, these two very different attempts to bring a Hegelian and Marxist “dialectic” into conversation with the “Jewish question,” underscore the complex relationship between inclusion and exclusion in modern Jewish history.³ It is a *leitmotif* developed in more recent work on antisemitism, which highlights the complexity of its relationship with progressive ideologies like liberalism and socialism.⁴

Explaining how the devastation that was the Holocaust could have emerged from the heart of modern European civilization remains a central problem in Jewish history. And yet, for the historical profession writ-large the frame of reference has shifted. This book represents both a response to this development and an attempt to move beyond it. We seek to reimagine a field shaped by European experiences and paradigms in the light of a relatively recent historiographical moment that has “provincialized Europe” and begun to explore issues of race, discrimination and hybrid identities in colonial and postcolonial settings, without taking much account of either Jews or the Holocaust.⁵ In so doing, we aim to integrate some of the established preoccupations of Jewish historiography, which have traditionally been studied in national, local and primarily European contexts, with the new perspectives opened up by transnational history and the global and imperial turn.

The time is ripe for such a project. The relationship between Jews, liberalism and antisemitism is a staple of modern Jewish history. Peter Pulzer first attempted to sketch the contours of this field in a properly historical manner when he argued in 1964 that “[t]he dominant ideology of this period, as we have seen, was Liberalism: a study of the theoretical content

² Funkenstein, “Dialectics of Jewish Assimilation,” 1–14.

³ For a thoughtful discussion of inclusion/exclusion see van Rahden, *Jews and Other Germans*, especially 6–8.

⁴ Exemplary: Hertzberg, *The French Enlightenment and the Jews*; Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction*, 119–38; Lang, *Converting a Nation*; Brustein and Roberts, *The Socialism of Fools?*; Hoffman, Bergmann, and Walser Smith, eds. *Exclusionary Violence*, 23–65.

⁵ See the agenda-setting Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*. For context, Chatterjee, ‘Brief History’. Relevant for the Jewish world in his context are Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*; Jonathan Boyarin and Daniel Boyarin, *Powers of Diaspora*.

of anti-Semitism will show us that it represented, in the first place, a reaction against this ideology.”⁶ Werner E. Mosse took a similar line, arguing that the place of Jews in modern German history was shaped above all by the conflict between liberalism and nationalism as fundamentally opposing forces.⁷ As products of the “German-Jewish symbiosis” who fled their respective hometowns when the Nazis came to power, Pulzer and Mosse believed that liberalism (with which they identified) and nationalism (which had persecuted them) were fundamentally incompatible. This view reflected an understanding that nationalism was itself an ideology, not just a flexible political language that could sit within different ideological currents. Most powerfully articulated in Hannah Arendt’s famous study of “totalitarianism”, it was both a response to the Holocaust and a product of the Cold War moment.

Thirty years after Pulzer’s pioneering study, two landmark volumes redefined modern Jewish history for a generation.⁸ The contributions to *Assimilation and Community* and *Paths of Emancipation* represent the collective achievement of a new wave of revisionist historians. These volumes have stood the test of time, but they do not speak to the historical sensibilities of the twenty-first century. Our task is to reconnect the concerns of that historiographical generation – and the pioneers that preceded it – with those of our globalized and fragmented world.

Together with Lisa Moses Leff, we take inspiration from the new, critical historiography of liberalism that emphasizes especially its symbiotic relationship with European imperialism.⁹ If, as Carole Pateman, Uday Mehta, Jennifer Pitts and Domenico Losurdo have argued, the liberal political tradition was founded not only on universalizing, democratic ideals, but also on a series of important exclusions, subjugations and deferrals related to gender, race and class, then thinking about Jews reminds us that religion (Christianity) was part of this exclusionary matrix.¹⁰ Antisemitism, in this perspective, was not simply a “reactionary” phenomenon; nor were liberalism and nationalism necessarily as antithetical as they seemed in the immediate aftermath of

⁶ Pulzer, *Rise of Political Anti-Semitism*, 29.

⁷ Werner E. Mosse, “The Conflict of Liberalism and Nationalism,” 125. Shulamit Volkov later nuanced this approach, see most recently *Germans, Jews and Antisemites*.

⁸ Frankel and Zipperstein, eds., *Assimilation and Community*; Birnbaum and Katznelson, eds., *Paths of Emancipation*.

⁹ Exemplary Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire*; Sartori, *Liberalism in Empire*; Bell, *Reordering the World*.

¹⁰ Pateman, *Sexual Contract*; Losurdo, *Liberalism*; Pitts, *Turn to Empire*.

the Holocaust. Rather, as Pieter Judson argued with respect to the Habsburg Empire, liberalism itself was one of the sources of antisemitic ideology and politics.¹¹ That insight informs the opening section of this volume, which we have called “The Limits of Liberalism.”

Understanding antisemitism not just in terms of right-wing nationalism or socialist anti-capitalism but rather as one of liberalism’s formative exclusions helps us to bring discussions of antisemitism into conversation with the new, globally oriented history of liberalism. Yet it is clear from this volume that we cannot understand the complexity of liberalism as a political tradition unless we appreciate the extent to which it was also constructed from the margins, both in Europe and beyond. For Jews – like women, colonial subjects and others originally excluded from full membership of the liberal polity – were not just objects of the liberal political imagination.¹² As liberal actors in their own right, who fought to overcome prejudice, oppression and discrimination, they too found ways to influence what liberalism became.

Second, we draw attention to the way in which global, imperial and transnational history reshapes our understanding of the Jewish past. Modern Jewish history was invented as a field by *maskilic* Jews who were products of the Jewish Enlightenment, conceived of themselves as Europeans and thereby helped to shape what that meant. More recently, however, historians of the Jewish experience have highlighted the role of Jews as agents of European colonialism and cultural imperialism, and the existence of transnational networks of Jewish solidarity that cut across political and cultural divides in the Jewish world even as they reified differences within it.¹³

Thinking globally allows us to move beyond the idea that Jews were a quintessentially “European” people and to understand Jewish history also as that of a global minority. Indeed, it is no longer possible to write the history of Jews, liberalism and antisemitism without looking across the Atlantic or taking account of colonialism. Consequently, this volume illuminates a diasporic geography which, we argue, better reflects the nature of Jewish history than the distinction between Europe and non-Europe,

¹¹ Judson, *Exclusive Revolutionaries*.

¹² For instance Cheyette and Valman ed., *Image of the Jew*.

¹³ Exemplary: Katz, Leff, and Mandel, eds., *Colonialism and the Jews*; Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews*; Bar-Chen, *Weder Asiaten noch Orientalen*; Green, “Old Networks, New Connections”; Granick, *International Jewish Humanitarianism*.

that only really acquired relevance for Jews with the Great Divergence. Rather than privileging European Jewish history (originally construed as Germanocentric), or adopting a structure that reflects the conventional oppositions between East and West, “Sepharad” and “Ashkenaz,” metro-pole and colony, we have divided the volume into sections that speak to complementary methodologies. This helps us to “provincialise Europe” in a Jewish key and to move beyond the framework imposed on both Jews, and Jewish history, by orientalism.¹⁴

Third, living in the twenty-first century has forced Jewish historians to engage more actively with the experience of other minorities and to think about the Holocaust in relation to other genocides. The challenges posed by racism, islamophobia and mass migration have given the study of Jews, liberalism and antisemitism a different relevance.¹⁵ They force us to think comparatively about racial and religious prejudice, and more dynamically about the interactions between Jews and other religious and ethnic groups – a point also made by the 2018 forum on new approaches to anti-semitism in the *American Historical Review*.¹⁶ As Ari Joskowicz argues in the present volume, this insight has unsettling implications for the categories we use to analyse inequality in modern societies. Jews, in short, were not simply victims of liberalism’s exclusions; they also benefitted from them – and this may have been most apparent not in the colonial metro-pole but rather in the periphery.

Fourth, the place of the Holocaust in the historiography of liberalism has shifted. On the one hand, Mark Levene’s monumental comparative study of genocide builds upon Adorno and Horkheimer’s pioneering insight that seeds of the modern history of antisemitism and racism were apparent from the very inception of the liberal project in the age of enlightenment and revolution. On the other hand, although the Holocaust came to symbolize the complete failure of liberalism, liberal Jewish politics survived the darkest hour of the twentieth century – as Malachi Haim Hacohen reminds us here. Meanwhile, the Holocaust itself became a critical touchstone in the new, more global politics of human rights. And yet for Jewish liberals the lessons of the Holocaust were not straightforward. Rather, as James Loeffler argues in this volume, the fate of the Jews of Europe served

¹⁴ See Kalmar and Penslar, eds., *Orientalism and the Jews*.

¹⁵ Bunzl, “Between Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia,” 499–508; Katz, *Burdens of Brotherhood*; Gidley and Renton, eds., *Antisemitism and Islamophobia*.

¹⁶ See Judaken, Introduction to “Rethinking Anti-Semitism.”

to illuminate the fundamental tension between individual and group rights at the heart of the liberal project.

Fifth, comfortable assumptions about the ideological affinity between Jews and liberalism can no longer be taken for granted.¹⁷ The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 created a new framework in which Jews were no longer the perpetual minority, but rather a majority which, for the first time, faced difficult choices about democracy, national identity and civil rights. For this reason, we emphasize the importance of 1948 as a key chronological marker, while rejecting Zionist teleology. Increasingly, Israel's past, present and future raise challenging questions for liberal-minded Jewish historians, prompting a flurry of work exploring the ideological and political connections between Zionism and the European colonial enterprise.¹⁸ Like so many of the issues raised in this book, these questions appear differently when viewed from the metropolitan perspective of the British intellectuals who are the focus of Arie M. Dubnov's chapter, than they did to those for whom nationalist liberalism was a means of resisting colonization and westernization, like the Young Turks who figure in Ozan Ozavci's contribution as potential supporters of Vladimir Jabotinsky.

Throughout, our authors bring together the more "internalist" approach to modern Jewish history that characterized *Assimilation and Community* and *Paths of Emancipation* – both of which failed to engage with antisemitism – with the "externalist" approach taken by scholars of antisemitism, who tend to study anti-Jewish hostility in isolation from Jewish experience.¹⁹ Giving weight simultaneously to dynamically related processes of inclusion and exclusion allows us to break down the boundaries between these approaches – just as situating European developments in their global context helps us view familiar phenomena through a different lens.

¹⁷ Novak, *Jewish Social Contract*.

¹⁸ See for example Katz et al., *Colonialism and the Jews*, Part 3.

¹⁹ Neither volume includes a chapter on antisemitism. Frankel's introduction to *Assimilation and Community* only mentions antisemitism in passing; Birnbaum and Katznelson only discuss antisemitism in two paragraphs on the final page of their introduction.

RECONTEXTUALIZING LIBERALISM AND THE JEWS

Liberalism is so central to the politics of our contemporary world that we often struggle to understand its historical origins, geographical variation and chronological specificity. In this volume, we take a more properly historical approach and understand liberalism both as an international political tradition born in a particular moment, and as a set of interrelated political cultures, reflecting the evolution of liberal ideas and political practices in a variety of contexts over more than a century.

The Constitution of Cadiz marked, in some accounts, the beginning of this new political tradition. Yet Helena Rosenblatt and Jörn Leonhard – both of whom proffer “world histories” of world [world liberalism] – understand liberalism as a more specifically French phenomenon in origin, rooted in the political and cultural faultlines of Restoration Europe and closely associated with the revolution of 1830.²⁰ Writing from a North American perspective, Rosenblatt traces liberalism’s transformations in the wake of successive waves of European revolution, with the emergence of a more interventionist liberal tradition in post-unification Germany and its appropriation by the New Liberals of Edwardian Britain. She shows how liberalism fused with more inclusive (but sometimes illiberal) democratic politics; how it adopted facets of socialism; how it came to be entwined with the civilizing project of European – and specifically British – imperialism; and how, during the Cold War era, it was refashioned into an American ideology focused on individual freedoms. Like Duncan Bell in a different context, Rosenblatt rejects a canonical or stipulative definition of liberalism; she emphasizes instead the moralizing agenda at the heart of the liberal project.²¹

Our authors too explore liberalism not just as a set of ideas (like religious toleration) or institutions (like representative government), but also as a sensibility, temperament, culture and “way of life.”²² More generally, we approach liberalism not as a clearly defined doctrine but rather as a spectrum bordered at one extreme by conservatism, and at the other by socialism.²³ As Raymond Williams noted, any keyword such as liberalism can only be understood in relation to a bundle of neighbouring ones, in

²⁰ Rosenblatt, *Liberalism*; Leonhard, *Liberalismus*. See also Kahan, *Liberalism*.

²¹ Bell, “What is Liberalism?”

²² See also Elaine Hadley, *Living Liberalism*.

²³ Following also Wallerstein, *Centrist Liberalism*.

this case not just socialism and conservatism, but also secularism, religion, progress, modernity, nation, class and gender.²⁴

Opening in Spain in 1812 with Michal Rose Friedman's essay, and closing with Malachi Haim Hacohen's account of Cold War liberalism, the chronological architecture of our volume sits neatly within the framework outlined by Rosenblatt. This chronology also makes sense when thinking about modern antisemitism, which has survived the Holocaust in both its right and left wing variants. For, as Michele Battini has recently argued, both strands trace their origins to the anticapitalist literature that arose in the context of the intransigent Catholic reaction against the revolutionary nexus of political rights, the emerging free market and secularization.²⁵

At the same time, our volume poses challenges for the history of liberalism as usually practiced, which has tended to be both Anglocentric and Eurocentric.²⁶ Rather than replicating the "'first in Europe, then elsewhere' structure of global historical time" that underpins historicism, we have chosen where possible to decentre the picture.²⁷ That is reflected in the range of contexts we address and the structure of individual sections: "The Limits of Liberalism" opens with Lisa Moses Leff's reassessment of liberalism and antisemitism in Romania and Algeria; "Living Liberalism" takes as its starting point Laura Arnold Leibman's account of the ways in which Caribbean Jewish men used clothing to express their civic virtue, race, and proximity to power; we set about "Rethinking East-West" from the seemingly peripheral vantage point of Spain; and our exploration of "Liberalism, Empire, Zionism" opens with Yaron Tsur's retelling of the Damascus Affair from the perspective of a local protagonist.

It is immediately apparent that developments in these unfamiliar contexts were not necessarily less significant than those in the European "center." Romania produced one of the earliest manifestations of modern political antisemitism. Algeria served as a platform for Edouard Drumont's election to the French parliament. The Sephardim of the Caribbean helped redefine Jewish manhood in an age of revolution and empire. Spain was a pioneer of European liberalism. Syria – not Europe – was the first centre

²⁴ Williams, *Keywords*.

²⁵ Battini, *Socialism of Fools*.

²⁶ Gray, *Two Faces of Liberalism*; Ryan, *The Making of Modern Liberalism*. Freedman, "European Liberalisms," 9–30 attempts a broader approach. Bayly and Biagini eds., *Giuseppe Mazzini*, and Bayly, *Recovering Liberties*, attempt a more properly global understanding of the liberal tradition.

²⁷ Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 7.

of the Damascus Affair. In short, all this suggests that we cannot understand the contradictions of liberalism if we relate to it simply as a Western political tradition.

Yet any attempt to engage with liberalism as a form of politics and set of ideas beyond the West must be alive to the “problem of translation.”²⁸ As Ozan Ozavci argues in his contribution to this volume, the “other liberalisms” that emerged outside the West (or at its periphery) developed a more defensive, communitarian, nationalist and emotional interpretation of the liberal tradition, one “that saw political, economic and religious protection from encroachments of overseas empires as a prerequisite of individual and communal emancipation, but not vice versa.”²⁹ He and Loeffler show that expanding our understanding of liberalism to include non-western contexts and collectivist variants makes it easier to identify specifically Jewish forms of liberal politics. Indeed, both argue that Zionism itself can be viewed in this light, rather than simply as a manifestation of European settler-colonialism.³⁰

CROSSROADS OF LIBERALISM AND THE JEWISH EXPERIENCE

Historians of the Jewish experience have tended to bracket liberalism and emancipation together.³¹ Such accounts conventionally open in the late eighteenth century, a period characterized by the *Haskalah*, the *Toleranzpatent*, and the French Revolution. Recently, however, David Sorkin has argued that Jewish emancipation was a “recurring and interminable” process drawn out over four and a half centuries: it did not begin “with the Enlightenment’s advocacy of a common humanity, nor with the French Revolution’s promulgation of citizenship”, and it did not end with the achievement of emancipation across western and central Europe by 1870, or in eastern Europe in 1917.³²

Like Sorkin, we decouple emancipation and liberalism but direct our attention instead towards the latter. This allows us to think more about individual subjectivity – including gender – and less about institutional change and social processes. While individual chapters do evaluate

²⁸ Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 17.

²⁹ Ozan Ozavci, “A Jewish ‘Liberal’ in Istanbul,” *infra*.

³⁰ See *Colonialism and the Jews*, Part 3; also Robinson, *Citizen Strangers*.

³¹ See for instance Birnbaum and Katznelson, “Emancipation and the Liberal Offer.”

³² Sorkin, *Jewish Emancipation*, 5.

different paths of integration in specific national and imperial contexts, we go beyond the minority/majority scheme often used when considering the place of Jews in modern states and societies by recognizing that the experiences of Jewish men and women need to be set alongside those of other religious and ethnic minorities who accessed and made competitive claims towards a fragmented liberal public sphere.³³

Shifting the focus from emancipation to liberalism necessarily imposes a different chronology, one rooted simultaneously in European developments and global rhythms. Modern Jewish history has been structured by a periodization that begins with the Enlightenment and ends with the Holocaust, although Sorkin's *longue-durée* approach challenges this framework. We propose a more subtle recalibration. Opening with the post-revolutionary crisis of the early nineteenth century, we identify 1848, 1919, and 1948 as key chronological markers that redefined the place of Jews within an increasingly hegemonic liberal political order, both nationally and internationally.³⁴ For if 1848 marked the moment when Jews began to enter the political mainstream, then 1919 created a new geopolitical framework both within Europe (minority rights) and beyond it (the Mandate), while 1948 saw both the birth of the State of Israel and the adoption by the UN of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – developments which, as James Loeffler has argued, were fundamentally interconnected.³⁵ Redirecting our attention away from more narrowly European dates like 1917 and 1945, this chronology serves to underline the ways in which a global history framework can change the terms of debate. We do not have to see 1948 as either the consummation or the culmination of modern Jewish history in order to appreciate its importance as a world-historical moment that marked the onset of decolonisation within the British Empire: one that mattered not just for Israel/Palestine but for India/Pakistan with its parallel history of partition as well.

Throughout this period, Jews and the “Jewish question” lay at the heart of many of the issues that most preoccupied liberals: from capitalism and its impact on traditional societies, through religious toleration, civil

³³ See Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*; Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. On the emergence of a specifically Jewish public sphere see Sorkin, *Transformation of German Jewry*; Berkovitz, *Rites and Passages*; Brenner, *Renaissance of Jewish Culture*.

³⁴ Wallerstein, *Centrist Liberalism*.

³⁵ Loeffler, *Rooted Cosmopolitans*.

rights, the emergence of a secular state and the nature of the liberal public sphere, to problems of national identity and racial hierarchy in an age of empire, internationalism and globalization.³⁶ In Germany and Austria, as Peter Pulzer has argued, the Jewish question served as a critical dividing line between more progressive leftist and more nationalist right-wing elements within the liberal movement. Like socialism, but differently from it, liberalism was one of the sources for antisemitic ideology and politics, as Marcel Stoetzler reminded us, and as both Leff and Simon Levis Sullam suggest here.³⁷ Yet repeatedly, Jews – always a tiny, vulnerable minority – emerged as key figures in constituting liberal politics and the apparatus of the liberal state: both in moments of liberal ascendancy (“liberal era” Germany and Austria, Giolitti’s Italy, Progressive Era America) and during international episodes of crisis and upheaval (1848, the interwar years).

Thinking about liberalism and the Jews consequently requires us to engage in two sets of issues: first, the problematic contemporaries described as “the Jewish question,” how it influenced liberalism and was shaped by it; second, the less familiar story of the role played by liberals who happened to be Jewish in constituting liberal politics and liberal political culture.³⁸ In this context, we should remember that Jewish liberals were – like their non-Jewish counterparts – mostly men. The double exclusion experienced by Jewish women both within the liberal public sphere and within Jewish communal institutions conditioned their engagement with liberalism in fundamentally different ways. While liberalism, Jewishness and anti-semitism were undoubtedly ‘situational’, men and women responded to the particular dynamics of these different contexts in ways that reflected the gendered options available to them.³⁹

The classic analyses of modern Jewish politics tend to neglect liberalism in favour of socialism and Zionism, reflecting a preoccupation with “the Jews” as a nation in the making.⁴⁰ Liberalism figures here as the politics of

³⁶ See for instance Schechter, *Obstinate Hebrews*; Karp, *The Politics of Jewish Commerce*; Penslar, *Shylock’s Children*.

³⁷ Sternhell, *La droite révolutionnaire*; Stoetzler, *The State, the Nation and the Jews*.

³⁸ For context see Case, *The Age of Questions*.

³⁹ See Okamura, “Situational Ethnicity,” 452–65, as interpreted in the German-Jewish case by van Rahden, *Jews and other Germans*, 8–9.

⁴⁰ Most obviously Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics*, and Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*.

“integrationism”: a project associated above all with western Europe.⁴¹ Jewish liberals, in this context, are interesting only as defenders of Jewish rights or as proponents of a liberal form of Jewish spirituality – a subject we do not really discuss in a volume that deals primarily with liberalism as a political tradition, broadly understood.⁴² Volume 8 of the new *Cambridge History of Modern Judaism* makes this point very clearly.⁴³ Part II, “Emancipation, Challenges and Consequences” includes chapters on the state, assimilation, liberal Judaisms, the new Jewish politics, Zionism and the left, but overlooks the critical role of Jewish men and women in constituting liberal political culture.

The significance of this phenomenon has likewise received surprisingly little attention from historians of liberalism, notwithstanding an emerging body of work on Jews and human rights.⁴⁴ Edmund Fawcett’s *Liberalism. The Life of an Idea* is a case in point since the author takes an explicitly prosopographical approach.⁴⁵ Fawcett devotes time and space to thinking about the social and religious hinterland of liberal figures like Alexis de Tocqueville, Edwin Chadwick and Woodrow Wilson, but the Jewishness of Louis Brandeis receives only passing attention, while that of Walter Lippmann, René Cassin, Louis Hartz and Karl Popper does not merit a mention. The same applies to Michael Freedman’s *Liberalism: A Very Short Introduction*, which tellingly includes a brief discussion about the emancipation of women and the working class, but says nothing about Jews, Jewish emancipation or antisemitism.⁴⁶ Even the key role of Jews in German liberalism is overlooked by the standard overviews of the subject: neither James Sheehan nor Dieter Langewiesche devote more than a couple of lines to it.⁴⁷

⁴¹ Hyman, “Was there a ‘Jewish Politics’ in Western and Central Europe?” Recent work on Russia has qualified this assessment: Nathans, *Beyond the Pale*, and Horowitz, *Jewish Philanthropy and Enlightenment*. On the USA see Dollinger, *Quest for Inclusion*.

⁴² We recognise, however, the central importance of new interpretations of religion, and religiously inflected secularism, for both Jewish and non-Jewish liberals. See Joskowicz and Katz, eds., *Secularism in Question*. Asad, *Formations of the Secular*.

⁴³ Hart and Michels, eds., *The Modern World, 1815–2000*.

⁴⁴ See Kurz, *Jewish Internationalism*; Samuel Moyn, “René Cassin,”; Loeffler, *Rooted Cosmopolitans*.

⁴⁵ Fawcett, *Liberalism*.

⁴⁶ Michael Freedman, *Liberalism*.

⁴⁷ Sheehan, *German Liberalism*; Langewiesche, *Liberalism in Germany*.

Jews were, of course, as divided in their political attitudes as everyone else.⁴⁸ Yet recognizing this truth should not obscure their importance in constructing liberal politics. Liberalism was the conduit that first allowed Jewish access to citizenship and mainstream society; it was also one of the main routes to Jewish power and influence. Many who embraced this route preferred to leave their Jewishness behind them, but this was not something they could easily do. As Arendt argued long ago, the unique place Jews occupied in the European political imagination reified Jewishness in a way that made it possible to live a self-consciously Jewish life without frequent or even any explicit engagement with Jewish communal or religious worlds.⁴⁹ Particularly in Europe, a desire to avoid “essentializing” Jewishness has made it hard to discuss Jewish difference.⁵⁰ That should not prevent us from understanding that the Jewishness of even secular and highly assimilated Jewish liberals still mattered in a social and political context where Jewishness was stigmatized and Jews regarded as “other”.

JEWS AND/BEYOND THE NATION, JEWS IN/BEYOND EUROPE

The relationship between Jews, liberalism, and antisemitism has usually been considered in the context of national historiographies, and the dynamics engendered by the birth of modern nationalism and the rise of the nation state.⁵¹ Like *Assimilation and Community* and *Paths of Emancipation*, this literature retains a Eurocentric focus although modern Jewish history has recently taken a more global and imperial turn. By contrast, the essays in our volume explore how liberalism, citizenship, nationality, religion, race gender, and the Jewish question functioned differently in the Jewish heartlands of western, central and eastern Europe, in the Mediterranean periphery of Spain and the Ottoman Empire, and in the North American Atlantic world where race carried different connotations. Nationalism, as Levis Sullam reminds us in his account of Osman Bey, whose *Conquest of the World by the Jews* was a principal source for the

⁴⁸ See for instance Häusler, “Demokratie und Emanzipation 1848,” 92–111; Häusler, “Konfessionelle Probleme in der Wiener Revolution von 1848,” 64–77. Hamburger, *Juden Im Öffentlichen Leben Deutschlands*.

⁴⁹ Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, chapter 3.

⁵⁰ See the introductory reflections in Hachohen, *Jacob & Esau*.

⁵¹ Pulzer, *Rise of Political Anti-Semitism*; Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction*; Almog, *Nationalism & Antisemitism*.

Protocols of the Elders of Zion, was not always as central to the production of antisemitic ideas as we might think. Empire, however, should certainly be understood as a significant parameter, whether the empires in question were nationalizing territorial empires like the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires, or imperial nation states like France and Britain.

What this meant was highly context dependent. The essays in Part II, “Living Liberalism,” provide different approaches to rethinking the paths of emancipation pursued in the Anglosphere where the Jewish claim to whiteness assumed central importance; in German-speaking central Europe with its more clearly ethno-linguistic nationalism; and in the Catholic south where the culture wars fought between the Vatican and liberal nationalism were particularly entrenched. Leibman shows that in the Caribbean, where Jewish and Afro-Caribbean emancipation movements were entangled, liberalism was written upon the body itself. Here, as elsewhere, liberalism was gendered male. Yet, as Jonathan Kwan reminds us, the rise of European Jewish men like Heinrich Jaques to positions of prominence proved a false dawn, at least in Vienna. By contrast, the case of Italy points to the proliferating options open to Jewish men and women in a context where civil society was still in the making and Catholicism infused the whole social order. Here, it is worth comparing the influence exerted by Sara Nathan on Italian politics and society with the challenges Emma Lazarus faced as a precocious woman intellectual struggling for self-realization in Gilded Age America, as outlined by M. M. Silver.

This variegated picture is reinforced by the contributions to Part III “Rethinking East-West,” which consists of three national/imperial case studies. Undercutting the East-West binary so central to liberal and Jewish political geographies, Friedman shows us how in Spain – a country that figures in the liberal political imagination as Europe’s interior “Orient” – late nineteenth-century ideas of race provided a platform from which liberals could reintegrate Jews into the nation. Cohen, meanwhile, notes the structural similarities between the situation of Jews in the Ottoman Empire and the United States, both of whom cultivated myths of welcome and insisted upon their exceptionality, in part perhaps because neither filled the role of the paradigmatic other. Finally, Silver shows how Jewish support for key planks of the American liberal agenda emerged as responses to the Russian Jewish experience, thereby connecting the emergence of American Jewish liberalism to the global production of Jewish political ideologies in an age of empire. Indeed, all three chapters in this section emphasize the

transnational circulation of ideas and individuals, a process that undercut national exceptionalism.

This sets the stage for Part IV, “Liberalism, Empire, Zionism,” in which the book takes a more explicitly imperial turn – with a particular eye to the Middle East. These issues are addressed from the local perspective of internationally networked Jewish notables in Syria and Egypt; the more nationally inflected orientation of the Ottoman capital; and the metropolitan perspective of the Polish-born British historian Lewis B. Namier. Like Cohen, Yaron Tsur underlines the cultural distinctiveness of the Ottoman Empire, a world so radically other that only fifty years before the Damascus Affair it had been possible for Jews in Basra to accuse local Christians of ritual murder, not vice versa. His conclusion is nuanced by Ozavci and Dubnov, who highlight the capacity of two rather different empires to serve as incubators for Zionism.

Part V, “Making, Unmaking, and Remaking Liberalism” concludes the volume with chapters that trace the role of Jews in the making of liberalism from the revolutions of 1830 to the Cold War. All three chapters take a transnational approach. Tellingly, while Abigail Green and James Loeffler trace fundamentally divergent strands of Jewish liberal politics, both identify the revolutions of 1848 as the critical point of departure. Their contributions help us to see the century from 1848 to 1948 as a distinct period in Jewish history, one structured by the relationship between liberal politics, marginality and nationality both in and beyond Europe. In this context, Malachi Haim Hacohen’s account of the Jewishness of Cold War liberals can be read as a kind of coda.

Collectively, the essays in this volume seek to navigate a path between sensitivity to locale and awareness of the big picture. This enables us to see how different chronologies and starting points ensured that quite similar – although always idiosyncratic processes – could take place in very different contexts at different moments. Dialectical readings of history are one way of expressing the complexity of Jewish history, but many of the contributions in this volume question the binaries – between majority and minority, metropole and colony, public and private, assimilation and self-assertion, inclusion and exclusion – upon which such readings rest. Race, for instance, was a shifting category that could operate for Jews in both inclusive and exclusive ways. This helps us to de-essentialize, historicize and contextualize antisemitism, which historiography still too often encapsulates within