

The Encoding of Antisemitism in Germany

Spring 2018
Free University of Berlin

Instructor: Matheus Hagedorn M.A.
Course level: Undergraduate
Type of course: Seminar
Department: Otto Suhr Institute for Political Science

Course description

The seminar addresses antisemitism as an integral part of political and social thought in Germany since its foundation. In this perspective, the Holocaust appears as a murderous radicalization of a broadly shared mindset of Germans of all classes and genders. After the German-led annihilation of the European Jews any too openly outspoken Jew-hatred wasn't an acceptable part of politics anymore in both West and East Germany.

After World War 2, antisemitism seemed to disappear from the political arena in Germany. But it just transformed its look.

The post-National Socialist German societies based on the complicity and connivance of mass murder. Perpetrators and bystanders of the Shoah shifted the antisemitic propaganda into private narration and an encrypted resentment which is widely called 'secondary antisemitism'.

The 'taboo' of antisemitic policy in Germany was rather a response to the universalistic influence of the opponent in the Cold War than a real and reflective progress of re-education. After the reunification of Germany and the end of Allied control over German soil, the taboo of undisguised antisemitism moulders, while the establishing of Israel-related Jew-hatred is encouraged by the ingenious antisemitism a part of Muslim population is bringing into discourse.

The seminar concentrates on hermeneutics and considers theories and methods from political science, history, social psychology, sociology and philosophy.

Course Objectives

- Understanding the deep roots of antisemitism in the common sense of German public since the 1880s
- Learning the impact of 'redemptive antisemitism' on the Jewish communities in Europe
- Realizing the shape shifting of antisemitism after World War II into an 'secondary antisemitism'
- Perceiving antizionism as a phenotype of antisemitism
- Considering Islamic antisemitism as an independent phenotype of anti-Jewish resentment in Germany

Central questions:

- What does it mean to encode antisemitism? When and in which contexts we can observe it?
- What is the method of a theorist? What is his/hers definition of antisemitism? Can we outline the terms which are relevant for the analysis?
- How can this theory be useful to analyze unintended or encoded forms of antisemitism?
- Are the used terms relevant to analyze how antisemitism is prevented to be perceived and combated as such?

Recommended Reading

- Friedländer, Saul (2008): Das Dritte Reich und die Juden - Die Jahre der Verfolgung 1933-1939, München: C.H.Beck.
- Herf, Jeffrey (2016): Undeclared wars with Israel: East Germany and the West German far left, 1967-1989, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hilberg, Raul (1993): Perpetrators, Victims and Bystanders, The Jewish Catastrophe 1933-1945, New York: Harper Perennial.
- Horkheimer, Max/Adorno, Theodor W (2004).: Dialektik der Aufklärung (1944), Frankfurt am Main: Fischer.
- Marcus, Kenneth L. (2015): The definition of antisemitism, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nelson, Cary/Brahm, Gabriel (eds.) (2014): The case against academic boycotts of Israel, Chicago/New York, Wayne State University Press.
- Rensmann, Lars (2004): Demokratie und Judenbild, Wiebaden: Springer.
- Salzborn, Samuel (2010): Antisemitismus als negative Leitidee der Moderne, New York/Frankfurt: Campus
- Schwarz-Friesel, Monika/Reinhart, Jehuda (2013): The language of hostility towards Jews in the 21st century, Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter.
- Simmel, Ernst (ed.) (1993): Antisemitismus, Frankfurt am Main: Fischer.
- Volkov, Shulamit (2000): Antisemitismus als kultureller Code, München: C.H. Beck.
- Welzer, Harald et al. (2002): Opa war kein Nazi – Nationalsozialismus und Holocaust im Familiengedächtnis, Frankfurt am Main: Fischer.
- Wistrich, Robert (2016): Der antisemitische Wahn – Von Hitler bis zum Heiligen Krieg gegen Israel, Berlin:Edition Critic.

Weekly topics/themes (including RVL's)

Week 1: Introduction

- Outlines of a working definition of modern antisemitism
- Presentation of the central questions/methods
- Organisational matters

Week 2: Antisemitism as Common Sense (1):

Volkov, Shulamit (2000): Antisemitismus als kultureller Code, München: C.H. Beck, 13-36.

Week 3: Antisemitism as Common Sense (2):

Elbe, Ingo (2015): Paradigmen anonymer Herrschaft, Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 403-424.

Week 4: The annihilation of the Jews in Europe (1): Radicalization of Common Sense? 'Redemptive antisemitism'

Friedländer, Saul (2008): Das Dritte Reich und die Juden - Die Jahre der Verfolgung 1933-1939, München: C.H.Beck, 87-128.

Week 5: The annihilation of the Jews in Europe (2): The victims of genocidal antisemitism

Hilberg, Raul (1993): Perpetrators, Victims and Bystanders, The Jewish Catastrophe 1933-1945, New York: Harper Perennial, 126-169.

Week 6: The 'soft denial' of the Shoah among post National Socialist German families

Welzer, Harald et al. (2002): Opa war kein Nazi – Nationalsozialismus und Holocaust im Familiengedächtnis, Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 18-43, 195-210.

Week 7: 'Secondary antisemitism'? (1) Antisemitism in the political culture of the Federal Republic of Germany

Adorno, Theodor W. (1977), Was bedeutet: Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit (1959), in: ders., Gesammelte Schriften, Bd. 10.2, Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 555-572.

Rensmann, Lars (2004): Demokratie und Judenbild, Wiebaden: Springer, 180-215.

Week 8: 'Secondary antisemitism'? (2) Antisemitism in the political culture of the German Democratic Republic

Herf, Jeffrey (2016): Undeclared wars with Israel: East Germany and the West German far left 1967-1989, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 449-462.

Haury, Thomas (2002): Antisemitismus von links, Kommunistische Ideologie, Kommunistische Ideologie, Nationalismus und Antizionismus in der frühen DDR Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 293-329.

Week 9: Antisemitism and 'taboo'

Schwarz-Friesel, Monika (2013): The language of hostility towards Jews in the 21st century, Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 346-398.

Week 10: Israel-related antisemitism as a new common sense?

Heyder/ Iser/ Schmidt (2005). Israelkritik oder Antisemitismus? Meinungsbildung zwischen Öffentlichkeit, Medien und Tabus. In: W. Heitmeyer (eds.): Deutsche Zustände. Folge III. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp. 144-165.

Week 11: BDS as a radicalization of a new common sense?

Marcus, Kenneth (2014): Is BDS Anti-Semitic?, in: Nelson, Cary/Brahm, Gabriel (eds.): The Case against academic boycotts of Israel, Chicago/New York: Wayne State University Press, 243-258.

Week 12: Antisemitism beyond 'taboo'? Anti-Jewish resentments among German Muslims

Jikeli, Günther (2012): Antisemitismus und Diskriminierungswahrnehmungen junger Muslime in Europa, Essen: Klartext, 245-290.

Mansour, Ahmad (2012): Antisemitismus unter muslimischen Jugendlichen, URL:

<http://www.bpb.de/politik/extremismus/antisemitismus/148081/antisemitismus-unter-muslimischen-jugendlichen>

Week 13: Final discussion

-Answers and new questions along the central question

-Feedback

Requirements

Basic attendance certificate:

- Regular and active attendance
- Two Reflection or Response Papers which refer to the required literature (700-900 words)
- or**
- Two protocols of the discussions of the previous week (700-900 words).

Performance record:

- Regular and active attendance
- Two reflection or response papers which refer to the required literature (700-900 words)
- or**
- Two protocols of the discussions of the previous week (700-900 words).
- An essay of 12-15 pages on a question along one of the weekly topics.