Sol Goldberg, Scott Ury, and Kalaman Weiser, eds., *Key Concepts in the Study of Antisemitism* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave - Macmillan, 2021), pp. 356.

by *Ulrich Wyrwa*

One of the paradoxes of the present, which is by no means lacking in contradictions, is that Antisemitism is unanimously discredited in the public sphere, many official observers of Antisemitism are active in the fight against Antisemitism as never before, but at the same time Antisemitic actors are emerging and carrying out spectacular acts and an increase in Antisemitism is perceived everywhere.

Moreover, Antisemitism currently appears in many different forms, so that there is some confusion about what is meant by antisemitism. At the same time, the accusation of Antisemitism is used in such an inflationary manner and furthermore is so exploited politically that the term risks becoming increasingly incomprehensible and meaningless. More than 20 years ago, Warsaw ghetto survivor and committed German literary critic Marcel Reich-Ranicki had already described the word "Antisemitism" as a "dangerous word."[1] How dangerous the term has become is also shown by the fact that a controversy about its definition has flared up, sometimes with unrelenting sharpness. This dispute is also spreading to studies of Antisemitism, where different camps are irreconcilably opposed to each other. In this complicated situation, it is extremely commendable that Sol Goldberg and Kalman Weiser, who both teach Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto, together with Scott Ury, Professor of Jewish History at Tel Aviv University, have edited a volume on the basic concepts of Antisemitism research.

The fact that the editors consider themselves members of one of the aforementioned camps of Antisemitism research, as Kalman Weiser's introduction makes clear, is not a disadvantage here, but rather sharpens the presentation and clarifies the terrain. On the question of the definition of Antisemitism, Weiser takes a clear stance, namely that there is no clear-cut and generally accepted definition of this neologism. With regard to the methods and

[1] Marcel Reich-Ranicki, "Das Beste was wir sein können," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, December 2, 1998.

scientific approaches, the editors leave the 4 female authors and 19 male authors of the volume free. They also leave the controversial English spelling of the term "Antisemitism" to the authors. While Weiser writes the word without a hyphen in his introduction, there are some contributions in which it is written with a hyphen.
The editors have selected 21 lemmas as central terms and concepts in Antisemitism research. They in turn have listed these alphabetically because, according to Weiser, this is the most neutral way to order them.

The book deals with the related neologisms and political movements that are decisive for research on Antisemitism, such as Antisemitism itself, Anti-Judaism, Zionism, Racism, Nationalism and Nazism, as well as the two complementary terms Philosemitism and Anti-Zionism.
The volume opens with an inspiring entry on the term "Anti-Judaism" by Jonathan Elukin, that concisely adopts the approach of the whole book. The term has found approval in recent studies as an umbrella term for the hostility against Jews in different periods but lacks a consistent and coherent usage. This concept also ignores the changes in social relations between Jews and Gentiles. Furthermore, the assumption of a uniform and continuous hostility towards Jews is based on the erroneous assumption of a uniform and homogeneous Jewry.
In the keyword "Anti-Semitism" itself, Jonathan Judaken merely provides an insight into the development of Antisemitism research with a focus on the period from the 1920s to the 1970s. Without referring to Reinhard Rürups' profound overview of the development of Antisemitism research, which was published in 1969 and can still be read with profit,[2] Judaken concludes with the remark that such an overview has so far remained a gap that he has now tried to fill with his contribution.
Co-editor Scott Ury outlines the uses of the neologism "Zionism" and its connection to the term "Antisemitism." He uses as examples writings by six

[2] Reinhard Rürup, "Zur Entwicklung der modernen Antisemitismusforschung" (1969), in *Emanzipation und Antisemitismus. Studien zur 'Judenfrage' der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*, ed. Rürup (Göttingen: Vanenhoek & Ruprecht, 1975), 115-125; Rürup, "Der moderne Antisemitismus und die Entwicklung der historischen Antisemitismusforschung," in *Antisemitismusforschung in den Wissenschaften,* eds. Werner Bergmann and Mona Körte (Berlin: Metropol, 2004), 117-135.

Zionist intellectuals and a Israeli historians. In his brief conclusion, Ury addresses the dilemma that the boundaries between scholarly research and public debates are blurred, especially when it comes to the question of the relationship between Antisemitism and Zionism.

Even though the concept of Racism is without question one of the key concepts in Antisemitism research, the relationship between these two terms is, as Robert Bernasconi points out in his contribution, disputed. Touching on various authors of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries - but not Arthur de Gobineau - Bernasconi focuses on National Socialist ideology. He does not address, however, the contrasting racial-biological concepts found in the Antisemitism of the National Socialist state. In conclusion Bernasconi aptly writes that the words Antisemitism and Racism have been virtually devalued at present by their incessant use.

Like the word "Racism," the term "Nationalism" is also often linked to Antisemitism, but it is unclear, according to Brian Porter-Szűcs, how the two phenomena are connected. Moreover, their relationship is contradictory. Nationalism, according to Brian Porter-Szűcs, cannot be classified as Antisemitic from the outset. One of his observations suggests that nationalist Antisemitism is strongest in those countries where the Jewish minority is small and the degree of assimilation is high. But even this remark, it might be critically noted, is not compelling, as the case of Italy shows.

The translation of Antisemitism into practical politics by the National Socialist state, according to Doris L. Bergen in her contribution on the concept of Nazism, reveals the consequences that Antisemitic ideology could have. Bergen traces the transformation of National Socialist Antisemitism from idea to political practice in three steps. However, she does not pursue the question of what effect the Antisemitic agitation of the 1920s had outside the still small National Socialist circles. In 1933, Antisemitism came to power and, in a process that intensified over several stages, developed a potential for violence that had never been achieved before. Bergen concludes with the observation that one of the most disastrous legacies of the National Socialist policy of violence has been the perpetuation of the image of the Jew as an eternal victim, which then went through a volt-face and painted them as profiting from their victim status.

In addition to the neologisms "Zionism" and "Antisemitism," the volume also contains the complementary terms "Philosemitism" and "Anti-Zionism." In keeping with the format of the *Key Concepts*, Maurice Samuels argues in his contribution on Philosemitism, that the volume should also include the positive experiences that Jews were able to have in exchange with the non-Jewish world. Samuels recapitulates individual episodes from the history of Philosemitism, only casually addressing some not unproblematic aspects of its use. He does not, however, take into account the decidedly philosemitic movement in Spain in the late 19th century. In conclusion, Samuels firstly advocates for paying attention to the hitherto completely ignored Philosemitism in the Muslim world; secondly, he warns against a new kind of Philosemitism that has emerged in the context of the current debates on Israel-related Antisemitism. This Philosemitism, which is also focused on Israel, contains, he warns, the seeds of disaster.

According to Loeffler, the term anti-Zionism also eludes a clear definition. He outlines three ways of using the term: the early inner-Jewish criticism of the Zionist movement, Arab anti-Zionism and the anti-Zionist policy of the Soviet Union. For all three usages, Loeffler points out pitfalls and ambiguities in the use of the term and he emphasizes the need to explore the convergences and divergences between Antisemitism and anti-Zionism.

Another group of entries refers to political-historical events such as accusations of ritual murder, the establishment of ghettos, pogroms, the spread of conspiracy theories and the Holocaust.

On the subject of the accusation of ritual murder, Hillel J. Kieval provides a profound overview of the origins and spread of this medieval legend, which first emerged in England in the twelfth century. Reflecting precisely on the respective contexts, Kieval shows how much the emergence of these rumors was connected to intra-Christian conflicts. In the mid-nineteenth century the legend resurfaced. However, Kieval's clear thesis is that it would be wrong to see nineteenth century ritual murder allegations as a return to medieval superstition. Behind the legends was now resistance to the emancipation of the Jews. For Kieval, the rumors were a symptom of political discord and social anxiety.

According to Daniel B. Schwartz, the word "ghetto" has become synonymous with the forced segregation of Jews from the Christian population. The relationship between the ghetto and Antisemitism, however, turns out to be

extremely complex. First, he outlines the emergence and spread of the term "ghetto," which originated in Venice in early modern Europe, and points out that the establishment of the ghetto in Venice, for example, must not necessarily be interpreted as a coercive measure. Schwartz then turns to the ghettos established by the National Socialists, especially in East-Central Europe, during the Holocaust. According to Schwartz, these ghettos were a calculated step towards the goal of exterminating European Jewry.

The volume's approach of liquefying or questioning the key concepts of Antisemitism research is also followed by Jeffrey S. Kopstein in his contribution on the keyword "Pogrom." This term is commonly associated with Antisemitism and hatred of Jews is diagnosed as the cause of violence. However, Kopstein remarks, if the Antisemitic pogroms are explained by Antisemitism, these interpretations form a circular argument. After a brief conceptual-historical review, Kopstein takes a look at three pogroms from different times and different countries: the Lviv pogroms of 1941, the pogrom in ancient Alexandria in 38 BCE and the anti-Jewish uprising of 1391 in Valencia. According to Kopstein's conclusion, pogroms were not primarily the result of pervasive Antisemitism; rather, specific social and political circumstances and the concrete situation in which Jews found themselves as a minority were decisive for the outbreaks of violence against Jews.

Any attempt to understand Antisemitism must remain inadequate, Jovan Byford claims at the beginning of the entry on "Conspiracy Theories," if this term is not taken into account. While Jews in medieval Europe rarely appeared as a malevolent force, but rather as the spawn of the devil, in conspiracy theories from the mid-nineteenth century onward they themselves became a powerful force dominating the world. In the present again, conspiracy theories target the state of Israel. With unmistakable criticism of the dominant language, Byford emphasizes that criticism of Israel, however, need not necessarily be Antisemitic or anti-Zionist, and that Israel must be measured by the same standards as any other state. However, Byford does not address the massive spread of Antisemitic conspiracy theories in the Arab world.

On the keyword "Holocaust," Richard S. Levy explores the question of how it changed the understanding of Antisemitism. The mass murder of Jews during the Second World War made older forms of dealing with the problem obsolete and at

the same time posed new challenges. According to Levy, the notion of eternal Antisemitism that had to lead inexorably to the Holocaust is not a fruitful path. Since the Holocaust originated in Germany, some scholars had argued that it is sufficient to trace German Jew-hatred from the Middle Ages to modern times to understand the Holocaust. According to Levy, however, this teleological view virtually prevents an understanding of both Antisemitism and the Holocaust. These one-dimensional representations, however, were the incentive for in-depth critical studies of both phenomena. New ambiguities, on the other hand, arise from the fact that Antisemitism itself has currently changed. It has become a moving target, as Levy writes, and the term is just as much as a shrill accusation.

In addition to keywords related to specific events, other lemmas are devoted to historical processes such as emancipation and secularism, including internal Jewish developments as expressed in the accusation of Jewish self-hatred. In addition, one lemma deals with an institution such as the Catholic Church.

Since some contributions point out the extent to which Antisemitism must be understood as a direct reaction to civic and civil equality as well as to Jews' social advancement, the concept of emancipation is also one of the key concepts in the study of Antisemitism. Frederick Beiser has studied both the history of the concept and the real history of Jewish emancipation in this sense. Beginning with the programmatic writing of the Prussian reformist politician Christian Wilhelm Dohm, published in 1791, Beiser traces the debates up to the controversies in the period of the emerging Antisemitic movement. Beiser concludes with a brief reference to Jewish reactions, the founding of the Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens and the formation of the Zionist movement. However, Beiser does not discuss the Berlin Congress of 1878 and the fact that through it the notion of Jewish emancipation became a principle of European diplomacy. Necessary is not only a precise reconstruction of the emancipation debates, but also, Beiser emphasises in his summary, an unbiased and thorough investigation of the motives of the antisemitic actors. Only if these are taken seriously is it possible to recognise the causes of antisemitism and its nature.

Beiser's contribution makes it clear that one of the preconditions for Jewish emancipation and thus the participation of Jews in public and political life was the separation of church and state. Lena Salaymeh and Shai Lavi, however, close their minds to this insight with their one-dimensional and uncritical concept of

secularism. Moreover, they offer no historical-critical reflections on the half-measures and ambiguities of the secularization process, but rather a literature review of current debates on the relationship between Antisemitism and Islamophobia. An essential and often neglected cause of hostility towards Jews as well as Islam, they proclaim apodictically, is secularism. Salaymeh and Lavi also describe secularism as a Protestant-Christian bias; it limits religion in the public sphere, but the restrictions do not affect all religious communities equally. According to Salaymeh and Lavi, not only is the state not neutral, they claim that it is downright repressive. The stigmatization of Jews and Muslims by secular law, they conclude, is an essential component of the hostility towards Jews and Islam.
With this categorical judgment, the authors make all differences between Antisemitism and anti-Islamism disappear, instead of working them out from a comparison they themselves demand but do not carry out. While the other contributions in the volume mostly illuminate the ambiguities and inner contradictions of the key concepts discussed, the explanations by Salaymeh and Lavi are based on a hermetic and one-dimensional concept. With their apodictic attribution, they also obstruct the understanding of secular self-understandings of Jews. The one-sidedness with which Salaymeh and Lavi deal with the topic of secularism corresponds to the lack of understanding that only the separation of secular and religious spheres made it possible for Jews to participate in public and political life, as Ruth Nattermann has recently convincingly demonstrated using the example of the Jewish women's movement in Liberal Italy.
Incorporating a theme of internal Jewish history, co-editor Sol Goldberg explores Jewish self-hatred. In his introduction, Goldberg emphasizes the complexity and controversial nature of the term. He takes up the skepticism towards the term but suggests that its use be steered in productive directions. In the inner-Jewish discourse, the term is also associated with betrayal and misused for defamation. Further confusion is caused by the fact that the word is often equated with Jewish Antisemitism. Recapitulating his own doubts about the term, Goldberg criticizes its misuse in the form of ideologically motivated accusations. As a key concept for Antisemitism research, the question of Jewish self-hatred is nevertheless fruitful. The concept makes it possible to grasp the psychological consequences of Antisemitism on Jews. At the same time, it provides insights into the intra-Jewish controversies.

In her contribution on the Catholic Church, Magda Teter traces a broad arc from the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 to the declaration "Nostra Aetate" from the Second Vatican Council in 1965. Despite the theological condemnation of Jews, the concrete relations of Jews and Christians were not necessarily and not always hostile, according to Teter. The harsh language of the anti-Jewish decrees obscured the complex relationships between Jews and Christians in everyday life. After the early modern ordinances, Teter moves on to the encyclical "Mit brennender Sorge" (not Brendenner, as it says in the book), which Pope Pius XI issued in 1937 in the face of Nazi persecution of Jews. Teter remarked that the Church nevertheless remained ambivalent, but it would have been clearer if she had also pointed out that this encyclical was directed against racism, and that Pius XI did not specifically name Jews in it and did not directly condemn antisemitism. Teter concludes her entry with a positive reference to the 1965 declaration "Nostra Aetate," with which the Catholic Church revised its anti-Jewish dogmas and condemned Antisemitism. Teter has convincingly urged that the relations between Jews and Christians should not be viewed solely from the perspective of Antisemitism and that sources on the social relations between Jews and Christians should be consulted in addition to the theological writings and church ordinances that are hostile to Jews.

What she has left out of this, however, is the extent to which the Catholic Church became not only a fellow traveler but, with Pope Pius IX, a protagonist of Antisemitism in the nineteenth century. Catholic newspapers, not only in Italy, played a significant role in the formation of the language of Antisemitism even before the term was coined.

Finally, a group of key categories refers to scientific methods and concepts such as gender, Orientalism and post-colonialism.

Any attempt to understand Antisemitism is misguided, so Sara R. Horowitz in her contribution on the keyword "Gender," if the intersections with the category of gender are not considered, especially since misogyny and hostility towards Jews often coincide. Horowitz chooses the time of the French Revolution as her starting point. Women and Jews faced similar obstacles, and their emancipation triggered similar cultural anxieties. Antisemitic texts portrayed Jewish men as greedy, effeminate, immoral or vulgar, Jewish women, in turn, were accused of behaving inappropriately.

These images can still be found in American popular culture of the second half of the twentieth century, and Horowitz concludes with a contradictory summary about the contemporary nature of these images. While some critics claim that these stereotypical representations have been debunked in American popular culture in the new millennium, others speak of the persistence of these traditional, gender-based anti-Semitic ideas.

The fact that the term "Orientalism" is also included as a keyword in this volume may at first seem surprising, since it is primarily associated with the hostile Western view of Arab societies of the Middle East. Ivan Kalmar, however, takes the reader back to the nineteenth century, when the common oriental roots of Jews and Muslims were being discussed in the sciences. In this phase of Orientalism, European Jews on their own initiative began to refer to their Oriental origins, as is evident not least in the Moorish style of European synagogue buildings. With Zionism, a new phase of Orientalism began, according to Kalmar, with which the decoupling of Jews and Muslims in the image of the Orient began. The Jews became Western and in the perception of the Arab population of Palestine they became colonizers. The Zionist project led to the dissolution of the old image of the Muslim-Jewish Orient, and Palestinian terrorism completed this development. In the anti-Zionist Antisemitism of the twenty-first century, the Oriental roots of Judaism no longer play a role. Self-critically, Ivan Kalmar notes in his introductory reflections that the reference to Orientalism could contribute to the knowledge of the history of Antisemitism, but it is less helpful in understanding its present.

Among the key categories relating to scientific methods and concepts is the term "Post-colonialism," but the issue of Antisemitism as Bryan Cheyette states, was sidelined when postcolonial studies became established. Antisemitism was partly treated as an issue of the West and acculturated Jews were even associated with whiteness. Zionism was presented as a colonialist movement, and together with the state of Israel it was only discussed polemically. Recently, however, a dialogue has come about between the disciplines of post-colonial studies and Jewish studies, which has become possible above all through the topic of diaspora and the experiences of Jews as a minority. Nevertheless, reservations about Antisemitism research remain present in Post-colonial Studies. According to Cheyette, Antisemitism research could nevertheless take up fruitful suggestions from post-

colonial studies when it turns its attention to the everyday experiences of racism. The point is to uncover the intertwined histories of colonial racism and racial Antisemitism and to view the different victim stories not as unique special cases.
Bryan Cheyette has not reflected however on the paradox that the most brutal colonial crimes were committed by countries where Antisemitism was rather weak, such as Great Britain or Belgium, while the countries where Antisemitism was fiercest, such as Romania and Russia, had no part in Western colonial history. Moreover, he does not address that form of colonial policy in which colonialist and Antisemitic practices coincided most strongly, that of National Socialist Germany in the East.
With the Hebrew phrase "Sinat Yisrael," hatred of Jews, Martin Lockshin has introduced a new term into Antisemitism research. Contemporary religious Jews often use this term, taken from the religious sources, to denote an eternal hatred of Jews. Lockshin focuses on the biblical and rabbinic sources as well as the shifts in meaning that this term has undergone. In the biblical texts, there are no references to Jews or Judaism being hated by others on principle. However, in the last book of the Bible, the Book of Esther, the figure of Haman is introduced, who was to become the incarnation of hatred of Jews. In the Talmud, hatred of Jews by non-Jews was not presented as inevitable. Only in the first century AD do we find isolated Jewish sources that speak of a fundamental hostility towards Judaism. As Lockshin shows, examining the early medieval exegesis of the Book of Esther, rabbis in this period began to interpret hatred of Jews, under the term "Sinat Yisrael," as a pervasive phenomenon. Lockshin concludes with the paradox that rabbinic sources for which fidelity to the laws was at the core of Judaism, sometimes remark that the observance of the laws must necessarily lead to the segregation of Jews, which is, in a sense, the cause of the long hostility towards Jews.
Neither the Bible nor the Talmudic sources, Martin Lockshin points out in his concluding sentence, portray hatred of Jews as universal and inevitable, nevertheless this view has become a pervasive feature of Jewish self-understanding.

As co-editor Kalman Weiser points out in his introduction, the volume, in addition to being skeptical about the demand for an unambiguous definition of the neologism, resolutely opposes a ubiquitous concept of Antisemitism under

which all forms of hostility towards Jews from antiquity to the present are subsumed. This broad concept would not only paint a largely monolithic picture of Jewish history, but also portray Jews solely as passive objects. In contrast, Weiser recalls Salo W. Baron's 1928 critique of the prevailing Jewish historiography of the time as a lachrymose narrative of Jewish history, a basic text of Jewish historiography to which several other authors in this volume also refer.[3]

As Weiser also emphasizes in the introduction, the editors' aim was to offer a study book for academic teaching, obviously with the Anglo-Saxon world in mind. Thus, the authors also come largely from an Anglophone academic tradition, and the English-language literature used for the individual contributions is correspondingly extensive. The number of German-language titles is very thin, and the literature from other languages even smaller. Only Frederick Beiser, in his contribution on the keyword "Emancipation," has drawn on German sources and studies to an appropriate extent.

The remark that the contributions to a handbook of this form are of varying quality is rather banal. Most of the essays, however, each in their own way and with different characteristics, provide a variety of stimuli; the inspiring entry "Anti-Judaism" is particularly noteworthy here. The above-mentioned critical comments on individual contributions cannot detract from this positive judgment. Only the contribution on "Secularism" is completely misguided and with its one-dimensional concept almost contrary to the concept of the volume. Not unproblematic, on the other hand, are the contributions on "Racism" and "Post-colonialism," as indicated above.

The selection of terms is surely the most problematic task in any lexical enterprise, and criticism of the selection or complaints about which keywords should have been included has something of petty nagging about it. But a few remarks seem helpful, if nothing else, to reflect further on the key concepts of Antisemitism research and thus to make clear what is productive about the concept. First, it is noticeable that no contribution to the historical semantics of the neologism "Antisemitism" itself is included. Language, however, offers a profound approach to understanding Antisemitism, as Reinhard Rürup and Thomas Nipperdey have already demonstrated in their, by the way, unmentioned article on this keyword

[3] Salo Wittmayer Baron, "Ghetto and Emancipation," *Menorah Journal* 14, no. 6 (1928): 515-526.

for the handbook *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*.[4] Although published fifty years ago, this entry can still be read with great benefit. In addition to the three keywords with the prefix anti-, the keyword "Anti-liberalism" or an entry that would have identified Antisemitism as a comprehensive anti-attitude against everything new would certainly have been helpful. Insofar as early Antisemitic activists were often attached to an outdated socio-moral world and the old values of a pre-capitalist subsistence economy, the keyword "Anti-capitalism" or the concept of moral economy could certainly also be grasped as a key concept in Antisemitism research. Furthermore, the keyword "Defensive action" or resistance deserved to be included in the list of key terms, which would also have fitted the profile of the volume excellently and touched on a topic that is still rather underexposed in Antisemitism research, despite the fundamental studies by Arnold Paucker.

These considerations, however, are not to be understood as an objection against the book; they should merely serve to further its stimulating concept. Apart from the one slip-up and two not unproblematic cases, the contributions are mainly fruitful because they liquefy the terms, clarify the historical shifts and different manifestations, or explore the relationship between continuity and discontinuity. Overall, the book is distinguished by the fact that it leaves well-trodden paths of Antisemitism research and questions established concepts. The great gain of the volume is that it has brought Antisemitism research out of the epistemic black hole into which the idea of eternal Antisemitism or of the longest hatred has pushed it and threatens to push it again and again. By placing Antisemitic thought and action in their respective contexts, illuminating the constellations in the occurrence of Antisemitism and determining its ambiguities and ruptures, the volume can sharpen the historical judgment of Antisemitism research, make Antisemitism more clearly comprehensible and thus also better combatable.

Ulrich Wyrwa, Universität Potsdam

[4] Thomas Nipperdey and Reinhard Rürup, "Antisemitismus," in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache*, eds. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, and Reinhart Koselleck, vol. 1 (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1972), 129-153.

How to quote this article:
Ulrich Wyrwa, discussion of *Key Concepts in the Study of Antisemitism,* by Sol Goldberg, Scott Ury, and Kalaman Weiser, eds., *Quest. Issues in Contemporary Jewish History. Journal of the Fondazione CDEC* 21, no. 1 (2022), DOI: 10.48248/issn.2037-741X/13349