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Review: A Specter Haunting Europe: The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism

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H-Diplo ROUNDTABLE XXI-2

Paul Hanebrink. *A Specter Haunting Europe: The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018. ISBN: 9780674047686 (\$29.95/£23.95/€27.00).

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INTRODUCTION BY SAMUEL MOYN, YALE UNIVERSITY

Paul Hanebrink's masterful account of the career of the Judeo-Bolshevik myth, *A Specter Haunting Europe*, has already attracted wide comment for its extraordinary insight and profound research. It also appeared at a moment of unexpected relevance. Its commentators in this forum uniformly celebrate Hanebrink's accomplishment, while giving distinctive interpretations of it and issuing challenging queries about it.

As Natalia Aleksion describes in her careful analysis and summary of the book, Hanebrink's gambit is to bracket the common and what one might call 'realist' approach to the theme. In standard accounts, the goal is to meet the discourse of Judeo-Bolshevism on its own turf, to acknowledge and contest in part how 'Jewish' Communism actually was, and especially how disproportionate or prominent Jews with wildly diverse relationships to the religion of Judaism or to modern Jewish culture were in Communist movements or regimes. Instead, as he clearly explains, Hanebrink takes up what the incidence of claims about Jewish Communism reveals, not about Jewish Communism, but about those claiming its existence, usually as a threat to longstanding nationhood and Western civilization. It is a 'discursive' history, one might say, opposed to a realist one.

Through his gambit, as Holly Case insightfully observes, Hanebrink avoids the paradox that refuting a myth could function to dignify it or even give it new life. But in spite of the tremendous advantages of Hanebrink's approach, it could come with a drawback. A study of a discourse or meme of the kind Hanebrink has produced, Case worries, is peculiarly subject to the risk of description of change, without any explanation of change. In his comment, Tony Michels, among other observations, recalls that some Jews themselves have celebrated the Jewishness, if not of Communism, then of leading Communists like Leon Trotsky. Throwing out the bathwater of inquiring into Judeobolshevism's reality, Michels stresses, historians should preserve the baby of understanding the intermittent fervency Jews have sometimes brought socialism, which from Karl Marx through Bernie Sanders has indeed been a real force (or, in the latter case, could still be). Correspondingly, Gil Rubin stresses that, alongside Jewish Communism, there has been and remains a highly potent and very real Jewish anti-Communism.

In reconstructing the twentieth-century ecology in which the Judeo-Bolshevik myth dramatically emerged and unpredictably mutated, Hanebrink turns in a trendsetting example of transnational European history. The United States is often present too. And Hanebrink's account unfolds over a striking number of decades. Indeed, the most revolutionary contribution of *A Specter Haunting Europe* is to place the years in between the world wars in a timeline that extends long after. Our own age of reinvigorated nationalism, with its own remarkable transnational alliances and projects of right-wing politics beyond borders, makes Hanebrink's study chilling but also illuminating reading.

But it is also the question of how Judeobolshevism lives on that stimulates perhaps the most contentious engagement in the forum. In his review, Rubin proposes distinguishing between "hard" and "soft" versions of Judeobolshevism, with very different afterlives. One version targeted allegedly immemorial traits of the Jewish people, while the other, Rubin suggests, treated Jewish Communism as evidence of a transitory problem. Udi Greenberg, for his part, wonders how much transformation the idea of Judeo-Bolshevism could undergo before becoming something else. "If the original Jewish-Communist myth proved so malleable," he asks, "how can we measure its actual significance for ideological projects that substantially edited and adapted it?" And he argues that contemporary antisemitism in the end looks very different (since it is a much more pure critique of "cosmopolitan" and "Jewish" capitalism—not to mention Zionism—than in the era Hanebrink examines).

Like the best studies in the discipline, *A Specter Haunting Europe* returns our gaze to the past in order to think more carefully about our own time. Hanebrink responds to the commentaries, acknowledging the validity of his reviewers' interventions. For example, he concedes to Michels that the participation of Jews in the Communist enterprise remains a pivotal research topic. Yet it is also the case, he observes, that the extraordinary attention paid to this topic, not merely by Jewish historians, but also by historians of Communism and Eastern European affairs, signals an overemphasis that only attention to the endurance of the Judeo-Bolshevik myth can explain. And notwithstanding Greenberg's compelling

observation that not all anti-Communist ideologies have focused on the Jewish role to the same extent (notably in Cold War liberalism), and that contemporary antisemitism targets Jewish capitalism rather than Communism, Hanebrink observes that there is still good evidence for the survival of the Judeo-Bolshevik myth. Drawing on Rubin's proposed dichotomy, Hanebrink suggests that hard forms of the myth remain in imagery and symbolism, as well as far right fantasy, while soft versions feature equally real if palpably weaker continuities.

All things considered, on the basis of a remarkable book the engagement in this forum advances our understanding tremendously. *A Specter Haunting Europe* is a milestone in the writing of modern European history, and in the study of antisemitism and other hatreds and their successive forms.

Participants:

Paul Hanebrink is Professor of History and Jewish Studies at Rutgers University, New Brunswick. He is the author of *In Defense of Christian Hungary. Religion, Nationalism, and Antisemitism, 1890-1944* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006) and *A Specter Haunting Europe. The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018).

Samuel Moyn is Henry R. Luce Professor of Jurisprudence and Professor of History at Yale University. His most recent book is *Not Enough: Human Rights in an Unequal World* (Harvard, 2018).

Natalia Aleksiun is the Professor of Modern Jewish History at the Graduate School of Touro College. She studied Polish and Jewish history at the Warsaw University, the Graduate School of Social Studies in Warsaw and Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and New York University. She received her doctorate from Warsaw University in 2001 and from New York University in 2010. She wrote *Dokąd dalej? Ruch syjonistyczny w Polsce, 1944-1950* (*Where to? The Zionist Movement in Poland, 1944-1950*) She co-edited two volumes of *Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry*: vol. 20, which is devoted to the memory of the Holocaust and vol. 29 about writing Jewish history in Eastern Europe. She has published articles in *Yad Vashem Studies*, *Polish Review*, *Dapim*, *East European Jewish Affairs*, *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, *Polin*, *Gal Ed*, *East European Societies and Politics* and *German History*. She is currently working on a book about the so-called cadaver affair at European Universities in the 1920s and 1930s and on a project dealing with daily lives of Jews in hiding in Galicia during the Holocaust.

Holly Case is Associate Professor of History at Brown University. She is the author of *Between States: The Transylvanian Question and the European Idea During World War II* (Stanford University Press, 2009) and *The Age of Questions: Or, A First Attempt at an Aggregate History of the Eastern, Social, Woman, American, Jewish, Polish, Bullion, Tuberculosis, and Many Other Questions Over the Nineteenth Century, and Beyond* (Princeton University Press, 2018).

Udi Greenberg is an associate professor of history at Dartmouth College, and is currently an ACLS Burkhardt fellow at the University of California-Berkeley. He is the author of *The Weimar Century: German Emigres and the Ideological Foundations of the Cold War* (Princeton University Press, 2015), as well as numerous articles on religious, intellectual, and political history in modern Europe. He is currently writing a book on the transformation of Catholic-Protestant relations in modern Europe, from animosity to peace.

Tony Michels is the George L. Mosse Professor of American Jewish History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is author of *A Fire in Their Hearts: Yiddish Socialists in New York*, editor of *Jewish Radicals: A Documentary History* (Harvard University Press, 2005), and co-editor of *The Cambridge History of Judaism. Volume Eight: The Modern World, 1815-2000* (Cambridge University Press, 2017). Michels is currently finishing a book on the history of American Jews and their relationship with the Soviet Union.

Gil Rubin is the Geoffrey H. Hartman Fellow at the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University. His research focuses on the twentieth century history of Jews in East Central Europe and in pre-state Palestine and Israel. He is working on a book manuscript, “The Future of the Jews: Planning for the Postwar Order.”

REVIEW BY NATALIA ALEKSUN, TOURO COLLEGE

Paul Hanebrink's new book, *A Specter Haunting Europe: The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism*, offers a remarkable comparative study of the idea linking Communism and Jews together as an imminent threat to national identities and, more broadly, Christian tradition as a foundation of the Western world. The author examines the multiple transformations of the legend and the myth's variety of functions in the course of the twentieth century and beyond. While a thoroughly researched historical study, the book makes for a depressingly relevant read, one which is necessary to understand political developments in East Central Europe today. As Hanebrink observes: "Communism is gone, but the idea of Judeo-Bolshevism refuses to go away" (5). *A Specter Haunting Europe* shows the adaptability of the myth of Jewish conspiracy in the twentieth century and explains its continued mobilizing potential for antidemocratic and racist ideologies.

Hanebrink's book helps to connect the dots between ostensibly independent public discourses, historiographies, contemporary projects engaged in politics of national histories, public commemorations, and political ideologies. Indeed, as recently as April 2019, the Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw announced an open event featuring lectures about Jews in the infamous Secret Service of Communist Poland (1945-1989). Some speakers who were scheduled to address the audience have built their academic careers on studying the security apparatus and the involvement of Jews in it.¹ While in the end the event was cancelled, it brought into the foreground one of the thorniest issues in postwar Polish history, one which casts a long shadow on any discussion about Polish-Jewish relations. In the Polish context, the issue appears, in particular, as a counter-narrative to questions about the role of non-Jewish neighbours during the Holocaust.

Hanebrink's book puts into transnational perspective and contextualizes not only this particular event but also the numerous publications, both popular and scholarly, that intend to reveal and quantify the Jewish presence in the Communist movement in Poland and more generally in Eastern Europe.² This nuanced and multifaceted study helps us to understand the deeper roots of the political situation in East Central Europe, the troubling persistence of the conviction about the Jewish roots of Bolshevism and Jewish responsibility for the crimes of Communist regimes.

As a historian of Central Europe, Hanebrink distances himself from the temptation of writing another book that disputes the myth. Rather, he analyses the circulation of ideas, the formal and informal networks engaged in a chain of borrowings, all of which contributed to the continued political relevance of a recycled trope that presents an alleged Jewish-Communist alliance as a mortal danger to traditional values. He shows, too, the emotional appeal of the myth which has become a familiar thread, both offering a soothing sense of continuity and rootedness in history and mobilizing a virtuous defence of ethno-national communities or Western civilization itself. As Hanebrink contends "[u]nderstanding its power requires the historian to ask what the idea meant to those who used it and treated it as 'real,' not to investigate to what extent it was or was not true" (25-26). Thus, he discusses the myth at face value precisely because of its role in inspiring and justifying discrimination, exclusion, and violence in the twentieth century.

A Specter Haunting Europe is hardly a book about Jews and their support of Communism or lack thereof. In fact, the author repeatedly dismisses the notion that Jewishness as a category is necessary or even useful for understanding the individual trajectories to Communism. Instead, the book is a subtle and complex intellectual history of a trope, the imaginary threat of Jewish power, and supposed innate immorality of Jews. Only occasionally – and quite interestingly as in the case of German

¹ See Krzysztof Szwarzgryk, "Żydzi w kierownictwie UB. Stereotyp czy rzeczywistość?" *Biuletyn IPN* (11/2005), 37-42.

² See Andrzej Paczkowski, Jews in the Polish Security Apparatus: An Attempt to Test the Stereotype, in: *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry* 16 (2003), 453-464; August Grabski, *Działalność komunistów wśród Żydów w Polsce (1944-1949)* (Warsaw: Trio, 2004); Paweł Śpiewak, *Żydokomuna: interpretacje historyczne*, (Warsaw: Czerwone i Czarne, 2012); Marci Shore, "Conversing with Ghosts: Jedwabne, Żydokomuna, and Totalitarianism," in Michael David-Fox, Peter Holquist, and Alexander M. Martin, eds., *The Holocaust in the East: Local Perpetrators and Soviet Responses* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2014), 5-28.

and Hungarian Jewish leaders in the aftermath of World War I or American Jewish leaders following World War II – does the author comment on direct Jewish attempts to counter the myth.

This methodological choice to focus on the changing meanings of the myth, its local adaptations, the actors involved in formulating it, and the role of the myth in different political contexts, as well as its instrumentalization and its function, allows for a coherent and convincing argument that deals with transnational thought and practice. The author shows the complex relationship between anti-Communism and Judeo-Bolshevism – which was at times evident in the public discourse, as in Nazi Germany, and at times hidden – in Central and Eastern Europe under Communist rule. Capturing both the transnational and national aspects of the Judeo-Bolshevik myth, Hanebrink examines its various incarnations in Hungary, Romania and Poland, but he also weaves in political projects formulated in Russia (and the Soviet Union), Austria, Germany, France and the United States.

The book begins with the emergence of the myth or “The Idea of Judeo-Bolshevism” as a cultural construct shared across the European continent. Hanebrink elaborates on the three pillars of anti-Jewish thought that contributed to the perceived connection between the Russian Revolution and Jews. Constructed from the already existing beliefs, these pillars were “recycled and rearranged to meet new requirements” (27). Bringing together the perception of Judaism as heresy as an expression of misrule and social disharmony, the belief in international Jewish conspiracy, and fears of Jewish fanaticism, the idea of Judeo-Bolshevism found fertile ground at a time of domestic and international chaos. Reproduced by clergy, politicians, writers, journalists, and political emigrés across new political borders, the trope reinforced ideas, and rumours. Linking Judeo-Bolshevism with an attack on European civilization coming from the East, the myth redrew its symbolic borders: “The Bolshevik was at once a rootless migrant Jew, the sign of an invading horde from the East, and an Asiatic beast” (41).

The second chapter, “The Great War,” shows how doubts about Jewish loyalty and often absurd accusations of sabotage and espionage prepared the ground for panic over Judeo-Bolshevism. While the Bolshevik Revolution and the chaos of the immediate postwar years provided fuel for the image of a revolution led by Jews, Hanebrink points to the connection of that anxiety to the earlier anti-Jewish phobias, and, more generally, to the rejection of the possibility that Jews could ever exert power over Christians. Ironically, the emergence and the spread of the myth was closely linked with anti-Jewish violence – serving to justify it and relativize it. This nexus remained crucial for the collective memory of the region – the victimization and the murder of powerless Jews and their imaginary power were all bound together. With examples of near hysteria from Ukraine and Poland during the Polish-Soviet War (1919-1921), Hanebrink shows how the image of the Jewish Bolshevik reflected “sovereignty panics” in Eastern Europe, especially in its borderlands (63). He identifies students, and army and security officials in Romania and in Hungary as particularly vulnerable to the adoption of the myth, though the same argument could be made for interwar Poland.

The belief in Judeo-Bolshevism also helped to shape the ‘culture wars’ waged in the interwar years that helped to shape collective national identities in Romania, Hungary, and Poland. During this time, Hanebrink argues, many European intellectuals found in Judeo-Bolshevism a way to think about a general cultural crisis of what they imagined as Western European civilization. As a powerful cultural trope and tool in the politics of Eastern and Central Europe after World War I, the image of the Jewish Bolshevik allowed for national mobilization, justified exclusion, and provided a road map for the current crisis and for the fight ahead. It also helped its formulators to envision ethnic communities and nation-states as defending not only their political interests but also shared Christian values. In particular, comparing the different political goals of Hungarian and Romanian elites, Hanebrink shows “the sheer malleability of Judeo-Bolshevik hysteria in Eastern Europe after 1918” (68). Pointing to broader European influences and power balances, Hanebrink connects the violence in Eastern Europe with the grand political vision of the Great Powers that sought to contain Communism and were themselves steeped in ideas about Judeo-Bolshevism.

The third chapter, “Refashioned by Nazism,” introduces the German variety of Judeo-Bolshevism as a tool that helped to mobilize party members and supporters and appealed to concerns of religious Germans and conservative intellectuals. While focused on illuminating the centrality of Judeo-Bolshevism to Nazi leader Adolf Hitler’s project well before the war – in fact

the chapter opens with the statement “Judeo-Bolshevism made Adolf Hitler” (83) – it continues to show transnational links and networks. In particular, Hanebrink argues that Nazi demonization of Jewish Bolshevism resembled the specter of Judeo-Bolshevism across Europe in the years between 1917 and 1923. But, after Hitler’s rise to power, it became intimately intertwined with the prospect of German hegemony, leading to a new pan-European vision. As the author notes: “The confluence of different racist idioms convinced some that Europe was embroiled in a vast civil war and that they should make common cause with Nazi Germany against the Bolshevik enemy. Others were less sanguine about a Europe under Nazi domination” (86). In its fourth chapter, which discusses World War II, but focuses on the German war in the ‘East,’ *A Specter Haunting Europe* further questions and deconstructs the vision of Europe united in the crusade against Jewish-Bolshevism. The titular “Barbarous Enemy” is central to Hanebrink’s argument about the deadly potential of the idiom of Jewish-Bolshevism as it proved crucial to the genesis of the ‘Final Solution,’ which was perceived as a fulfilment of the historic mission behind the front lines in the East and in Berlin. Building on historical scholarship about the role of local initiative in radicalizing the treatment of Jewish men, women, and children in Eastern Europe and the effect of local collaboration, Hanebrink examines the anti-Jewish violence and mass killings in the summer and fall of 1941.³ He is particularly interested in the tropes of ‘revenge’ for the Soviet occupation and for what were perceived as Jewish Communist crimes. Discussing the slaughter of Jews at the hands of the Nazis, their allies, and the local population, Hanebrink concludes that “[c]ollective memories of Soviet occupation structured this convergence and gave it content” (138). For all their conflicting political goals, to Hitler’s allies the crusade offered possibilities for envisioning a shared future in a Europe cleansed of the Jewish-Bolshevik threat.

The chapters on the postwar period, “Under Communist Rule” and “From Judeo-Bolshevism to Judeo-Christian Civilization,” problematize the seemingly clear-cut distinction between Western and Eastern trajectories. In the West, anti-Communism was transformed by embracing a political and cultural crusade against Communism without it being linked to Jews, whereas in the East visions of Jewish Bolshevik power and post-war revenge inspired popular understanding of the end of the war and of the Soviet bloc. The author contrasts the thriving of the concept of Judeo-Christian civilization that became the benchmark of the struggle against the Soviet Union in the United States and in Western Europe, including Western Germany, with the continued relevance of the myth in the East. While perceived as a problem in the early postwar years, the trope also offered a way to legitimize Communist rule by appealing to the national variation of Communism and by scapegoating Jewish party members at times of political crisis. Ultimately, the myth of Judeo-Bolshevism re-emerged after the fall of Communism, clashing with the vision of European identity for which the memory and commemoration of the Holocaust became crucial, treated as “a kind of litmus test for the presence or absence of a robust and self-critical civil society” (238). The last chapter “Between History and Memory” traces this clash offering a subtle and informative analysis of the debates about the Holocaust and of the Communist rule inspired across new European borders. Hanebrink ties together common aspects in historical debates in Germany, Romania, Poland and Hungary, he reveals the potential of the strategy that allows politicians and their allies “to downplay the importance of the Holocaust for national history and to focus public attention instead on other victims” (273).

With its many textual and visual references and lines of intellectual continuity and change, *A Specter Haunting Europe: The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism* itself makes for a haunting read. Far from the cliché of antisemitism as imbibed with the mother’s milk, the book shows how the myth of a specifically Jewish complicity in a criminal regime, national subjugation, and thirst for power is not only doing well, but why and how it remains deeply relevant for the identity politics of Eastern Europe. But

³ Among these, see Christoph Dieckmann, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen, 1941-1944*, (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2011); Diana Dumitru, *The State, Antisemitism, and Collaboration in the Holocaust: The Borderlands of Romania and the Soviet Union*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Jan Tomasz Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of The Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Christoph Gerlach, *The Extermination of the European Jews* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Vladimir Solonari, “Patterns of Violence: The Local Population and the Mass Murder of Jews in Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, July-August 1941,” *Kritika* 8:4 (Fall 2007): 749-787; and Kai Struve, *Deutsch Herrschaft, ukrainischer Nationalismus, antijüdische Gewalt: Der Sommer 1941 in der Westukraine* (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2015).

Hanebrink takes his concern further, urging his readers to understand the broader implications of the myth: “Long after the demise of Communism, the figure of the Jewish Bolshevik continues to flicker around the issue of European identity” (282).

REVIEW BY HOLLY CASE, BROWN UNIVERSITY

Without a doubt, history is relevant again. As commemorative statues become sites of serious political contention, and political activists invoke the presumed racial purity of the Middle Ages or idolize otherwise obscure Southeastern Europeans as “crusaders,” and speak of Italian and Romanian fascists as role models, it seems as though the Right in particular is looking to the past to make meaning out of the present, often through violence. Given these developments, Paul Hanebrink wonders: “How should historians respond?” (5).

One way might be to seek a common origin or cause for the phenomenon. The German *Historikerstreit* of the 1980s, however, stands as a cautionary tale, revealing the extent to which such an approach is often itself steeped in a right-wing agenda. Setting a point of origin can, after all, be as much a political as a historiographical gesture. When the current Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán moved the political fulcrum of our moment from 1989 to 2008, history was recast to function as a global critique of neoliberalism rather than a global victory of liberalism.

Furthermore, the search for root causes is just as often about assigning an overweening significance to *certain* roots. In the case of Judeo-Bolshevism, this endeavor has entailed essentializing Jewishness as inexorably bound with Communism, often through dog whistles and innuendo. Hanebrink writes: “Early in his life, for example, Lev Davydovich Bronstein had changed his name to Leon Trotsky. After 1917, counterrevolutionaries around the world insisted on changing it back. They did the same with secretary of the Comintern Karl Radek, who was born Karol Sobelsohn and who often appeared in right-wing publications as ‘Radek (Sobelsohn).’ The Hungarian Bolshevik leader Béla Kun was similarly transformed into the hyphenated Béla Kun-Kohn. His commissar of war became ‘József Pogány (Weiss).’ Repeated often enough, these genealogical facts seemed to offer privileged insight about the deeper realities of Europe’s revolutions.” (14-15) As such, Hanebrink continues, “assessing the idea of Judeo-Bolshevism as a matter to be verified or falsified is profoundly misleading,” not least of all because it “requires historians to impose rigid ethnic categories on men and women whose sense of themselves was always more complex and multifaceted.” (5) In other words, to dig for a common root is to accept the terms on which the forces wielding the Judeo-Bolshevik myth build their own case.

If Hanebrink had sought to mirror the strategies of counterrevolutionaries, he might have started his own story by citing David Nirenberg’s 2014 book on *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition*, which begins with an analysis of anti-Judaism in the ancient world.¹ Instead, Hanebrink refrains from treating Judeo-Bolshevism as “just another variation in transhistorical Jew hatred” (6), noting how “A search for the origins of Judeo-Bolshevism can easily lead to a series of near-infinite regressions” (27). Part of the problem is that the strategy of those who see Judeo-Bolshevism as real have been historically “endlessly cross-referential,” which is to say that through “circulation and mimetic reproduction” as well as “constant repetition” they have sought to create a “reality effect” whereby “the specter of the Jewish Bolshevik came to seem real” (32). Practically, then, those who propagate the Judeo-Bolshevik myth resemble not so much the old-school anti-Semite as they do the “totalitarian ruler” described by the political philosopher Hannah Arendt: “like a man who persistently insults another man until everybody knows that the latter is his enemy, so that he can, with some plausibility, go and kill him in self-defense.”²

After the Bolshevik Revolution, Hanebrink writes, the idea of Judeo-Bolshevism “went ‘viral’” (32). By “linking strikes and worker unrest” in disparate parts of Europe (and beyond) to “the political activities of Russian revolutionaries” (36), the image of the Jewish Bolshevik “was used to delegitimize political alternatives” (37). The range of political problems and preoccupations that have been funneled through the idea of Judeo-Bolshevism is breathtaking. It was brandished in

¹ David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: the Western Tradition* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2013).

² Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Cleveland and New York: Meridian Books, 1958), 424.

Hungary, which sustained considerable territorial losses after the First World War, as readily as it was in Romania, which had acquired a massive swath of territory at the same time.

Nonetheless, the specter of Judeo-Bolshevism did not always subsume all other political preoccupations. In Hungary and Romania, for example, it often colored, but did not always supersede territorial anxieties and the policies that emerged from them. And the French Tharaud brothers—Jean and Jérôme—whose travel writings did much to spread the specter of Judeo-Bolshevism far and wide, were themselves inconsistent in their characterization of Jews and their politics in the places they visited (37-40).

Nazi Germany was another matter. Adolf Hitler was one of the few state leaders who positioned the “Judeo-Bolshevik menace” consistently at the center of his political rhetoric from roughly 1920 onward. Hanebrink writes: “Judeo-Bolshevism made Adolf Hitler” (83). More significantly, the Nazis—through their intervention in the Spanish Civil War, for example—not only facilitated the idea’s spread, but truly weaponized it. Hanebrink shows how “the Nazi regime saw an opportunity in the Spanish crisis to reshape the international order in Europe,” as the conflict “provided a tangible point of reference for Nazi fantasies about war, the clash of races, and Germany’s global future” (96).

Yet perhaps the most fascinating analytical intervention Hanebrink makes is in his treatment of the postwar period. He shows how the liberal postwar Western order formulated the idea of “Judeo-Christian civilization” as part of a theory of totalitarianism crafted largely to refute the Judeo-Bolshevik myth. “Equating Nazism and Communism as similar threats to human dignity and the human person transformed the place of Jews in anti-Communist politics,” writes Hanebrink. The twin ideas thus became a “central feature of Cold War liberal rhetoric.” This answer to the rhetoric of Judeo-Bolshevism was not without its costs, however, for it enabled former Nazis to “reinvent themselves as Cold Warriors” (235). It also so closely engaged the Judeo-Bolshevik idea that, ironically, its very structure maintained the scaffolding of the Judeo-Bolshevik myth, keeping it perpetually in play.

In this respect, Judeo-Bolshevism seems reminiscent of the way in which Timothy Snyder in his 2003 book *The Reconstruction of Nations* describes nationalist histories as “metahistorical, a long word [...] that means ‘not even wrong.’” Usually the historian tries to take down these metahistories by directly engaging them, but Snyder worried that doing so only lengthens their lease on life. “Refuting a myth is dancing with a skeleton,” he wrote, “one finds it hard to disengage from the deceptively lithe embrace once the music has begun, and one soon realizes that one’s own steps are what is keeping the old bones in motion... To argue with metahistory,” he concluded, “risks accepting its rules of engagement, and nonsense turned on its head remains nonsense.”³ And sure enough, as Hanebrink shows in both the introduction and the epilogue to the book, the skeleton lives. “When the Cold War ended,” he writes, “the threat of Communism evaporated and the panic about the influence of ‘Jewish Bolsheviks’ was translated into the politics of contested memory,” but “the figure of the Jewish Bolshevik continues to flicker around the issue of European identity” and beyond (282).

The main character of this extraordinarily subtle and well-argued book is an idea, one that seems unmoored from material conditions insofar as it appears to move rather comfortably across varying material landscapes, from the war-ravished and depressed societies and economies of the interwar period, to the more stable and flush societies and economies of the present day. In pointing to the oversimplifications and strategic deceptions of those who deployed the myth, Hanebrink quite often refers to the *lack of substance* inherent in their claims about people, places, and events. One side effect of this approach can be to make individual people, places, and events seem relatively insignificant. So how significant *were* material relations for the ebb and surge of the myth of Judeo-Bolshevism? Certainly concrete convergences of personalities and politics—in Munich and in Spain, for example—do figure into Hanebrink’s analysis, so it would be good to know whether the book is meant to be an intervention in the direction of encouraging historians to again take ideas more seriously as movers of history, or if the

³ Timothy Snyder, *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569-1999* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 10.

relative absence of an analysis of period material relations and events is merely an accident of the book's emphasis on rhetoric.

Anti-Communism was one of the greatest ideological forces of the twentieth century. In Europe, in particular, its appeal was astonishingly broad, cutting across religious, national, and political lines: Hungarian Catholic priests, French socialist politicians, and Polish nationalists all mobilized to fight against the Bolshevik menace. Many, in fact, saw anti-Communism as the most important project of their lifetime. This was true for Vatican officials, who launched a massive transwar propaganda campaign against Communism in books, exhibitions, and sermons; the Nazis, who conceived their brutal imperial conquests as a defensive blow against the coming Communist hordes; and British Cold War liberals, who helped orchestrate Western Europe's postwar military buildup under the wings of NATO. The diversity and intensity of anti-Communism facilitated the formation of surprising coalitions throughout the twentieth century, as groups and peoples of different backgrounds joined hands against the common threat. But it has also puzzled scholars: what was it about anti-Communism that made it adaptable to so many different, even conflicting, ideological projects?

With his grippingly written and staggeringly researched *A Specter Haunting Europe*, Paul Hanebrink provides a potent answer to this vexing question. With a panoramic narrative that brings to light dozens of writers, politicians, and religious thinkers, he claims that at least some of anti-Communism's animating power came from its deep ties to anti-Semitism, an ideology shared by an equally broad array of Europeans. After all, before the Cold War, anti-Communists routinely conflated Judaism and Bolshevism. Writers such as British journalist Robert Wilton and religious authorities such as the Catholic delegate to Germany Eugenio Pacelli (later Pope Pius XII) warned that the Communists' 'real' goal was not merely overthrowing capitalism, but inaugurating a global Jewish dictatorship. This blend of religion, economics, and racism was not new, and drew on the deep well of European Judeophobic tropes. It perpetuated long-held beliefs that Jews were pathologically obsessed with money and secretly working to destroy Europe from within. But the modern notion of 'Judeo-Bolshevism,' especially in the first half of the twentieth century, proved much more violent than its predecessors. It helped to unleash countless pogroms, massacres, and, ultimately, the Nazi genocide. While historians have long noted the ideological entanglement of anti-Semitism and anti-Communism, no work has done so with the thoroughness and scope of *A Specter Haunting Europe*. Hanebrink is especially impressive in his ability to weave together Western, Central, and Eastern Europe, and to chart both the similarities and differences between Judeo-Bolshevism's different variations. The book's first chapters, which focus on the decades from Vladimir Lenin to Adolf Hitler, exemplify the benefits of this synthetic approach. They trace how this myth circulated from to Russian émigrés to French journalists and Hungarian bishops, creating truly pan-European ideological networks.

The book's most provocative claims, however, arrive in its last chapters, which carry the story into the Cold War. According to Hanebrink, the myth of Judeo-Bolshevism did not disappear with the Third Reich's demise. The ideological blocs that emerged in divided postwar Europe may have repressed some aspects of this myth, but they sustained and perpetuated others on both sides of the Cold War divide. The authoritarian regimes of the Communist bloc, of course, swiftly crushed any talk of anti-Bolshevism. Anti-Semitism, however, continued to flourish in the form of publications and show trials against prominent Jewish Communists. Perhaps in an effort to appeal to anti-Semitic sentiments (and disassociate themselves from Judaism), Communist leaders in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and other countries accused their Jewish counterparts of infiltration and treason. And like the Nazis before them, they claimed that Jews were simultaneously the agents of international political-economic ideology (this time capitalism) and a specifically Jewish project (this time Zionism). Things were no less grim in Western Europe, Hanebrink claims, where the Americans' dislike of anti-Semitism helped push it to the very extreme fringes, but where anti-Communism remained as fanatical and toxic as before. While postwar leaders occasionally mused about Europe's membership in a tolerant and enlightened 'Judeo-Christian' culture, like their Nazi predecessors, they continued to juxtapose themselves to the 'godless' Communists, whom they decried for alleged infiltration and subversion. Equally important, Western European leaders, like Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, continued to conceive of the Communist threat in ethnic and even racial terms. Propagandists who under Hitler had decried the Soviet Union as a Jewish empire now warned of an impending 'Asiatic' invasion. In this regard, the Cold War marked not the end of Judeo-Bolshevik fantasies, but merely their mutation.

Hanebrink is right that Cold War ideologies, and especially their fixation with infiltration, carried the marks of earlier convictions. But an important question remains: if the original Jewish-Communist myth proved so malleable, how can we measure its actual significance for ideological projects that substantially edited and adapted it? To take the case of the Eastern bloc: even if the Communist show trials relied on vile anti-Semitic stereotypes, how crucial was the specific Judeo-Bolshevik version to their logic? Could the much older trope of Jews as an international *capitalist* cabal be an equal, or even more significant, source? Indeed, as Hanebrink mentions in earlier chapters, the image of the Jew as an agent of global finance predates the Bolshevik Revolution (the notorious *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* appeared first in 1905 and was translated in most languages after 1917). Even the Nazis, while obsessing over Jewish-Communist infiltration, routinely associated Jews also with capitalism (decrying them as owners of department stores in Germany, and later as the puppet-masters of Wall Street). If postwar Communists, then, found it so easy to discard the Bolshevik part of the Judeo-Bolshevik myth, could it be that their thinking borrowed in fact more from earlier stereotypes and symbols?

Hanebrink's approach to Western Europe raises similar questions. Contemporaries (especially from the Left) accused Adenauer and other Cold War warriors of sharing some of Hitler's perverse logic. They noted, as Hanebrink puts it, that "postwar West German anti-Communism contained echoes of interwar anti-Bolshevism, for those with ears to hear them" (217). Still, how much did such Cold War thinking depend on the conflation of Communism with Jews, as opposed to other and earlier forms of anti-Communism, which were not as thoroughly preoccupied with the 'Jewish Question'? After all, Adenauer himself (like several prominent Catholics) was anti-Communist long before the 1940s and 1950s, and was concerned not with the Bolshevik's alleged Judaism but with the threat that he believed Communism posed to traditional gender roles, the family unit, and church autonomy. This question is especially important because Hanebrink charts how, from the 1940s onward, Americans began to utilize the concept of 'Judeo-Christianity,' a term that captured both their perceived tolerance (*vis-à-vis* Nazi racism) and their spiritual essence and respect for human dignity (as opposed to 'Godless' Communism). While the term did not quite catch on at the time in Europe (it would become more popular later, in response to Muslim migration), its widespread usage did not prevent conservatives and other former Nazi-sympathizers from joining arms with American diplomats, whom they now saw as allies against the Soviets. How constitutive, then, was anti-Semitism for such thinkers and politicians after World War II? How to explain their ability to shed the first part of the Judeo-Bolshevik moniker but their continued obsession with the other?

Evaluating the role of continuity and change is perhaps most pertinent to *A Specter Haunting Europe's* final pages, which brings the story to our own days. The collapse of Communism, Hanebrink maintains, and Eastern Europeans' subsequent quest to resurrect their long-suppressed national past, has also revived the old association of Jews with Communism. As Romanian nationalists rushed to celebrate 1940s Romanian leader Ion Antonescu, for example, they also came to justify his darker actions, such as his collaboration with the Nazis and his support for anti-Semitic discrimination, which he explained as defensive anti-Communist measures. Things were even uglier in Hungary, where nationalist politicians bemoaned that "liberal Jewry" has conspired to dilute national pride and sovereignty in favor of "rootless" cosmopolitanism and international institutions. These efforts, one nationalist commentator wrote, began when Jews sided with Communism, which made them "as vile as the fascists" (262). According to Hanebrink, such ideological thinking provided fertile ground for the recent wave of xenophobic vitriol on both sides of the Atlantic. When nationalists and racists decry Jews as subversive and anti-national enemies (as in the conspiratorial-minded attacks on George Soros) or, even more commonly, decry Muslim as agents of 'foreign' invasion, its activists continue to build off the Judeo-Bolshevik tradition. This is not the most central part of Hanebrink's book—it receives only brief epilogue—but it is politically its most potent. It does therefore merit some reflection.

While the past without a doubt informs these recent forms of dark xenophobia, one wonders how much they center on the Bolshevik-Jewish link. When right-wing activists traffic in conspiracies on Soros, after all, they do not accuse him of Communist sympathies. If anything, it is his status as capitalist billionaire that is reviled as the source of his power (or in the most extreme conspiracy theories, his alleged ties to the Nazis). The same is also true for the recent panic over Muslim migration, which may echo Judeo-Bolshevism's blend of religion and race, but does not associate with recent migrants with an alternative economic-political model. When European nationalists such as France's Marine Le Pen or Hungary's Viktor Orban warn of Europe's impending 'Islamization,' do they borrow from the anti-Bolsheviks, or from the long orientalist and

racist traditions of Islamophobia? Indeed, the rising centrality of Muslim-bashing to nationalist politics seems to have altered the function of anti-Semitic sentiments. European nationalists see no contradictions between their campaigns against the ‘rootless’ Soros, and their warm embrace of the state of Israel, whose leadership they admire for its unabashed ethno-nationalism and militarist confrontational stance against its Muslim-Arab citizens and neighbors. Israel is mentioned in Hanebrink’s book only in passing, and mostly in the context of Communist anti-Zionism. But its rising prominence in the formation of anti-Muslim front (epitomized in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s aggressive alliance building with Orban, his Austrian counterpart Sebastian Kurz, and Donald Trump) shows the distance traveled by the European right since the previous century.

The final question posed by Hanebrink’s remarkable and illuminating book, then, is perhaps not just about the long afterlives of myths, but also about their sometimes surprisingly quick change and death. Why do certain forms of bigotry remain persistent, while others radically mutate and even evaporate? This is a question worth asking especially in our time, which is again so permeated with fear of from ‘foreign’ invaders. It is perhaps by reflecting on our difference from, and not just similarity to, older generations, that we can hope to have a different future than theirs.

 REVIEW BY TONY MICHELS, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

A Few Words on Jews, Communism, and the Judeo-Bolshevik Myth

How should historians think about the long, complicated encounter between Jews and Communism? That fraught question finds no easy answer, even today, more than a century after the Bolshevik seizure of power. Paul Hanebrink's authoritative and lucid examination of the Judeo-Bolshevik myth, according to which Jews caused the October Revolution and exported it far and wide, sheds light on the difficulty. For many years, well-meaning people either avoided the subject of Jews and Communism or denied any special relationship between the two. Most Jews were not Communists and most Communists were not Jews. For those anxious to dispel the calumny of a Jewish Communist conspiracy there was little else to say.

Yet the Judeo-Bolshevik myth persists. Indeed, its longevity and geographic reach are remarkable. In 2013, Hanebrink notes, the nationalist Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik) held a rally in Budapest to "protest the 'sale' of Hungary to Jewish investors and to commemorate Hungarian victims of 'Bolshevism and Zionism'." In Greece "the neofascist Golden Dawn accuses Communists of wanting to destroy the ethnic purity of the Greek people, and associates Communism with 'Zionist world conspiracy'" (2). Other examples abound. Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement which currently governs Gaza, alleges in its charter that Jews "stood behind the French and the Communist Revolutions and behind most of the revolutions we hear about here and there."¹ The white supremacist ideologue, David Duke, insists that Bernie Sanders is a Communist and a Zionist, whose political loyalties are intentionally obscured by the Jewish-dominated news media.

The above sampling suggests that the Judeo-Bolshevik myth involves two elements: opposition to workers' revolution and to Jewish political sovereignty. *A Specter Haunting Europe* does not explore how the two elements function in the antisemitic imagination. Have antisemites understood Communism and Zionism to be distinct but complementary movements or two parts of a single whole? Have they considered one more threatening than the other or regarded both as equally pernicious? Whatever the case, it seems clear that a fixation on 'Jewish power' conjoins Communism and Zionism in the minds of antisemites. Fear of hidden Jewish forces predates the modern era, as Hanebrink notes, but it escalated during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as Jews moved from "the margins of Christian European society into new roles in economic and social life" (28). Labor upheavals, revolutionary insurrections, and the rise of mass socialist movements further heightened anxieties about Jews. A forgery named *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* purported to reveal a Jewish plot for world domination. At the time of its publication, in 1903, *The Protocols* had little influence outside of Russia, but then came 1917. Within a single month in the fall of that year, two events changed the course of international history. Zionist leaders procured an endorsement of a Jewish homeland from Great Britain and the Bolsheviks, some of whose leaders came from Jewish parentage, instituted a dictatorship of the proletariat. The Bolshevik Revolution and the Balfour Declaration seemed to demonstrate, like nothing before, the inordinate power and global ambitions of the Jews. In the annals of anti-Jewish hostility, the Judeo-Bolshevik myth constituted a new phenomenon.

A Specter Haunting Europe tells how the specific conditions of war and revolution spurred the belief that Jews had "created and supported Bolshevism and were therefore responsible for its crimes" (14). Hanebrink has no interest in scrutinizing the veracity of such accusations. As he writes in the introduction, "assessing the idea of Judeo-Bolshevism as a matter to be verified or falsified" has proved futile. "Again and again, scholars, political liberals, and members of the Jewish community have debunked the claim that 'Jews were responsible for Communism,'" but Judeo-Bolshevism remains an active part of "the ideological arsenal of right-wing nationalists." (5). Rather than engage in refutation, Hanebrink seeks "to understand why it

¹ See Hamas Charter (August 1988) in Walter Laqueur and Barry Rubin, editors, *The Israel-Arab Reader: A Documentary History of the Middle East Conflict* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001), 344.

[the Judeo-Bolshevik myth] has been and remains so powerful” (5). He traces the evolution, circulation, and deployment of conspiratorial ideas about Jews and Communism from the October Revolution into the post-World War II period.

A Specter Haunting Europe does not examine the actual relationship of Jews to Communism. Hanebrink warns against focusing “disproportionate attention on one political choice that some Jews made, ignoring the much richer diversity of Jewish politics in the twentieth century” (5). It is a wise caveat. Communism was, to be sure, just one among many options pursued by Jews. Still, if taken too far, Hanebrink’s caution would inhibit research into a complex subject that defies simple characterization. The engagement of Jews with Communism was varied from the beginning and grew increasingly diverse and contradictory over time. But as a starting point one may say that considerable numbers of Jews in the Soviet Union and abroad sympathized with the Bolshevik regime, often because they saw it as being somehow beneficial to Jews.

The figure of Leon Trotsky is illustrative. No single individual loomed larger in the Judeo-Bolshevik myth than Lev Davidovitch Bronstein, Soviet Russia’s first People’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs and founder of the Red Army. In the United States, where he had lived for ten weeks in early 1917, Trotsky received much negative attention. Reverend George Simons, the former Superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Russia and Finland, testified before a Senate subcommittee that “the present chaotic conditions in Russia are due in large part to the activities of Yiddish agitators from the East Side of New York City, who went to Russia immediately following the downfall of the Czar [...] These Yiddish agitators from the New York East Side “followed in the trail of Trozky [sic], who was himself on the East Side at the time of the Czar’s overthrow.”² Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer blamed a “small clique of outcasts from the East Side of New York” for the “looting” of Russia. “Because a disreputable alien—Leon Bronstein, the man who now calls himself Trozky—can inaugurate a reign of terror from his throne room in the Kremlin; because this lowest of all types known to New York can sleep in the Czar’s bed, while hundreds of thousands in Russia are without food or shelter,” he asked, “should Americans be swayed by such doctrines?”³ Similarly, a journalist in *The Forum* wrote, “When, drunk with power, Lenine [sic] and Trotsky sought, beginning with Germany, to make Bolshevism the ruling force in every civilized country, where did they send many of their cleverest propagandists? They sent them to New York, to the lower East Side, the breeding place of revolt in the New World.”⁴ In the eyes of such antisemitic anti-Communists, Trotsky was seen as irrefutable proof of a Jewish plot that extended from New York to Moscow.

However, antisemites were not the only people to invest meaning in Trotsky’s Jewish background. Jews did so, too, albeit from friendly perspectives. That a Jew by birth, if not affirmation, could rise to the upper echelon of government in a country practically synonymous with antisemitism amazed immigrant Jews in the United States. Thus, in November 1917, the Hebrew writer, Reuven Brainin, jotted in his diary, “Leon Trotsky—a few months ago he lived in a poor apartment not far from my street in the Bronx. He made ten dollars a week working for *Novi Mir*. And, behold, today he is the foreign minister of Russia and he stands at the head of government in that country.”⁵ A columnist in the anarchist weekly, *Di fraye arbeter shtime*, expressed unabashed ethnic pride in Trotsky. He boasted, “We may feel glad and be proud that, again, a son of our people, on whose heart the great word ‘justice’ has been written in fiery characters, has applied all his strength and power toward the triumph of justice.”⁶ S. M. Melamed, a prominent Zionist intellectual, portrayed Trotsky as an avenger

² Quoted in “Jews from America in the Bolshevik Oligarchy,” *Literary Digest* 60 (1 March 1919), 32.

³ Attorney General Palmer, “The Case against the ‘Reds,’” *The Forum* (February 1920), 175.

⁴ John Bruce Mitchell, “‘Reds’ in New York’s Slums: How Insidious Doctrines Are Propagated in New York’s ‘East Side,’” *The Forum* (April 1919), 444.

⁵ Reuven Brainin, *Kol kitvei Ruven Ben Morecai Breinin*, vol. 3 (New York: Ha-va’ad le-hotsa’at kol kitvey Rueben Ben-Mordecai Brainin, 1940), 322.

⁶ N. Tobias, “Unzer Trotski,” *Di fraye arbeter shtime*, 19 January 1918, 4.

driven by the suffering Jews had endured throughout history. “Leon Trotsky is a universalist in his revolutionary aspirations, because he is the incarnation of the wrath, anger and bitterness of a race tortured since the destruction of the ancient Roman Empire,” Melamed stated.⁷ Could words more incendiary be uttered by a Jew? Well, yes. A. S. Zaks, a former member of the Bund (Russian Jewish Labor Alliance in Lithuania, Poland, and Russia), expressed Melamed’s sentiment even more forcefully:

I wish that many radical Jews like Trotsky...were heads of government. Our foes would then have gnashed their teeth and foamed with rage, but they would not have dared to touch us, let alone perpetrate massacres and pogroms against us. The Jewish Bolsheviks demonstrate before the entire world that the Jewish people has not yet degenerated, and that this ancient people is still alive and full of vigor. If a people can produce men who can undermine the foundation of the world and strike terror into the hearts of countries and governments, then it is a good omen for itself, a clear sign of its youthfulness, its vitality and stamina.⁸

Enemies and sympathizers alike attributed great significance to Trotsky. To Jews, at least those on the political left, Trotsky represented the glory of the October Revolution, the important role of Jews in it, and its special significance to the Jewish people. To conservatives, he represented the Bolshevik threat to Western Civilization. Feared or admired, Trotsky seemed to personify revolution.

The foregoing discussion of Trotsky is not meant to validate the Judeo-Bolshevik myth, of course. Claims of Jewish conspiracy have always been paranoid, warped, hateful, and, ultimately, violent. Still, historians will have failed to understand Communism without examining its Jewish dimensions. That thousands of Jews streamed into the Soviet party-state apparatus during the Revolution’s early years was not incidental. They assumed positions of responsibility and authority because Bolshevik leaders saw Jews as especially reliable for reasons explained by Yuri Slezkine in *The Jewish Century*.⁹ In the United States, Jews joined the Communist Party in numbers far out of proportion to their share of the population. They comprised a solid majority of Communists in New York, the center of American Communism during its heyday. Surely that fact reflects something important about Jews and the movement they helped build. The challenge is to figure out why Communism attracted so many Jews, and how their involvement mattered, without lending credence to the Judeo-Bolshevik myth.

⁷ S. M. Melamed, “St. Paul and Leon Trotsky,” *The Reflex* (November 1927), 10.

⁸ Quoted in Joseph Nedava, *Trotsky and the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1971), 250.

⁹ Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 174-203.

REVIEW BY GIL RUBIN, YALE UNIVERSITY

One of the main achievements of Paul Hanebrink's *A Specter Haunting Europe: The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism* is to show how the history of antisemitism in the first half of the twentieth century was tied to a specific conception of Jews as a dangerous geo-political menace. In the period spanning the two European World Wars, Hanebrink shows, nationalists, fascists, conservatives, and many liberals in Europe and across the Atlantic embraced the myth of Judeo-Bolshevism—the belief that Communism was a Jewish plot and that Jewish radicalism posed an imminent threat to the future of the nation-state, Christianity, and 'Western Civilization.' European imagination was gripped by fear of revolutionaries such as Leon Trotsky, Béla Kun, Kurt Eisner and Rosa Luxemburg—whose radicalism and commitment to the destruction of the European order was said to flow from their Jewish pedigree, even though it had not been central to their own identities. Indeed, when the "bearded, Bohemian Jewish theater critic" Eisner, who spearheaded a socialist revolution in Bavaria, was asked by Jews in Munich to resign in favor of a non-Jew, he promptly refused and responded that the question of origin belonged to "an age that has now been overcome."¹ Enzo Traverso tried to capture European anxieties over the Jewish Bolshevik threat with a contemporary analogy, noting that to the German diplomats who arrived in November 1917 at Brest-Litovsk to negotiate a treaty with the Soviet Union, the sight of Trotsky and other Soviet Jews disembarking the train and distributing revolutionary leaflets to enemy soldiers must have seemed "like Al-Qaeda arriving at the G8 summit."²

Historians have studied how hysteria over Judeo-Bolshevism instigated anti-Jewish violence during the Russian Civil War and was a central tenet of Adolf Hitler's Nazi racial worldview. But by offering a temporally and geographically wide-ranging account of this myth and its multiple reformulations, Hanebrink's study ends up showing that the idea of Judeo-Bolshevism was the main axis around which antisemitic violence, politics, and thought was expressed in the first half of the twentieth century. This history of Jews as an imagined political menace is incredibly important. After the defeat of Nazism, as Hanebrink shows, Jews in Europe and the United States were recast in starkly opposite terms—as the embodiment of the West, either within the framework of a Cold War and Christian discourse on Judeo-Christian Civilization, or as part of a later European post-national identity centered on the memory of the Holocaust that envisioned the Jew as the archetypal European. Recovering the pervasiveness of this earlier imagination of Jews as a grave political danger is essential to making sense of the virulence and violence of antisemitism in the first half of the twentieth century.

For Hanebrink, Judeo-Bolshevism is not a rigid and strictly defined political concept but, drawing on Shulamit Volkov's work, a 'cultural code' which various groups and individuals drew upon and reformulated in moments of social and political crises to express the notion that Jews were uniquely responsible for Communism and its crimes.³ This methodological approach allows him to cast a wide net and offer a long twentieth-century history of this idea. Hanebrink examines the emergence of Judeo-Bolshevism in the crucible of violence and revolution of the First World War, its widespread use by fascists and conservatives during the interwar period, and its role in the Holocaust. But his book also examines how the idea lived on after the war even as the explicit language of Judeo-Bolshevism was abandoned. In postwar Communist Eastern Europe, Hanebrink shows, Judeo-Bolshevism was reframed as the idea that Jews were responsible for the crimes of Stalinism and drove a series of anti-Zionist and 'anti-Cosmopolitan' campaigns. After 1989, Judeo-Bolshevism was resurrected into debates about the memory of the Holocaust. The accusation of Jewish support for Communism was used to diminish Nazi and Eastern European crimes by portraying them as a response to the danger posed by Jews.

¹ Jerry Z. Muller, *Capitalism and the Jews* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 149.

² Enzo Traverso, *The End of Jewish Modernity* (London: Pluto Press, 2016), introduction.

³ "Antisemitism as a Cultural Code: Reflections on the History and Historiography of Antisemitism in Imperial Germany," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 23 (1978): 25-46.

Though each formulation of Judeo-Bolshevism was in its own way unique, one distinction that emerges from reading the book—on which Hanebrink does not delve much—is that there nonetheless seem to be two overarching and separate traditions of thinking about Judeo-Bolshevism. The first is a radical, fascist and biological vision that saw Judeo-Bolshevism as part of an international Jewish conspiracy—which included Jewish capitalists - to destroy and subjugate Christian Europe and the United States. Its proponents imagined the fanaticism and violence of Bolshevism to be rooted in the Jewish psyche, spirit, and religion. This vision of Judeo-Bolshevism was tied to the widespread percolation of anti-Jewish conspiracy theories. Though *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* was first published in 1903, it only reached widespread circulation after the Great War. In 1919 and 1920, editions of the *Protocols* appeared in Germany, France, Britain, the United States, Italy, Scandinavia, Poland, Japan, and the Middle East. It became the most globally distributed book after the Bible. In the early 1920s, “whole shiploads” of the antisemitic industrialist Henry Ford’s *The International Jew* were sent to Romania and Hungary.⁴ Hitler, Hanebrink observes, considered Ford an authority on the Jews, and it was this type of biological and conspiratorial vision of Judeo-Bolshevism that was subsequently turned by the Nazis into state ideology.

Yet there was also another ‘soft’ version of Judeo-Bolshevism. Proponents of this vision shared the idea that the preponderance of Jews in the ranks of Communist parties and radical politics was a problem that needed to be confronted. But they argued that the Jewish attachment to fanaticism was not the product of the Jewish essence, rather of the specific political, social, and economic conditions of the Jewish masses in Eastern Europe that made them susceptible to radicalization. This form of Judeo-Bolshevism conceived of itself as not antisemitic, even though it shared the antisemitic assumption that the political choices of individual Jews —however tenuously at times those individual could be defined as Jews at all —were part of a broader ‘Jewish question.’ Perhaps the most startling articulation of this vision is the future British prime minister Winston Churchill’s oft-quoted 1920 essay “Zionism versus Bolshevism—A Struggle for the Soul of the Jewish People.” “The conflict between good and evil which proceeds unceasingly in the breast of man,” Churchill wrote, “nowhere reaches such an intensity as in the Jewish race.” Though the “most remarkable Jewish race” has given Christians a system of ethics “which is the most precious possession of mankind,” there is at the same time “no need to exaggerate the part played in the creation of Bolshevism ... by these international and for the most part atheistical Jews.” For Churchill there were, as he wrote, “good and bad Jews”—the good Jews chose assimilation in their nation-states and Zionism in Palestine, a site of “refuge to the oppressed from the unhappy lands of Central Europe,” and the bad Jews chose revolution.⁵ A distinction between good and bad Jews had long shaped European thinking on the ‘Jewish question.’ But Churchill’s essay specifically reframed this trope as a choice between the politics of Communism and anti-Communism.

Hanebrink beautifully traces how this tradition of Jewish and non-Jewish anti-Communism fueled the postwar vision of Judeo-Christian Civilization. But his book pays less attention to how central anti-Communism had been to Jewish politics during the interwar period, during the height of the Judeo-Bolshevik hysteria. Chaim Weizmann, president of the World Zionist Organization, anticipated Churchill’s formulations when he framed Zionism as an antidote to Jewish radicalism. Speaking at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, he observed that a Jewish national home in Palestine “was the only [solution] which would in the long run ... transform Jewish energy into a constructive force instead of being dissipated in destructive tendencies.” A year later Weizmann proclaimed that in embracing Zionism “Britain with her political farsightedness, understood sooner and better than any other nation ... that the Jewish question ... may become a gigantic force of construction or a mighty instrument of destruction.”⁶ Similarly, many other Jewish leaders envisioned the defense Jewish rights in the new states in post-World War I Eastern Europe as a bulwark against radicalization. In the interwar period,

⁴ André Gerratit, *The Myth of Jewish Communism. A Historical Interpretation* (Brussels: P.I.E Peter Lang, 2009), 16-17.

⁵ Winston Churchill, “Zionism versus Bolshevism: A Struggle For the Soul of the Jewish People,” *Illustrated Sunday Herald* (8 February 1920), 5, accessed at https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Zionism_versus_Bolshevism.

⁶ Sharman Kadish, *Bolsheviks and British Jews: The Anglo-Jewish Community, Britain and the Russian Revolution* (London and Portland: Frank Cass, 1992), 163. On the history of interaction between Zionism and antisemitism see Scott Uri, “Strange Bedfellows? Anti-Semitism, Zionism and the Fate of the Jews,” *American Historical Review* 123:4 (October 2018): 1151-1171.

Jewish rights advocacy, Zionism, and humanitarian relief were repeatedly framed as political programs designed to stem the Judeo-Bolshevik tide.

Emphasizing this distinction between two forms of Judeo-Bolshevism is I think essential for understanding the contemporary reverberations of these ideas. After the defeat of Nazism, the biological and conspirational tradition was pushed to the margins of European politics. As Hanebrink notes, it has been recently revived on the far right in post-Communist Eastern Europe and in American and global White Nationalist movements. Jewish ‘globalists’ and ‘Zionists’ are imagined to be plotting the destruction of Christian nations by weakening tradition and religion, spreading values such as liberalism, homosexuality and multiculturalism and facilitating the mass immigration of Muslims and non-whites. The second tradition lives on as well. Many right-wing nationalists vigorously attack the ‘globalism’ of the philanthropist George Soros or the work of Jewish humanitarian organizations such as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) while professing that they oppose antisemitism and embrace their own version of ‘good Jews.’ Many conceive of themselves as part of a tradition of Christian philosemitism. They argue that they do not oppose Jews as such but rather a set of pernicious political ideas that threaten society overwhelmingly promoted by individual Jews: the open society, open borders, and cultural Marxism. Yet while these two traditions are different, they repeatedly feed off and reinforce one another. They also share a basic anti-Jewish assumption that, as Hanebrink’s shows, lay at the center of the history of anti-Jewish politics in the twentieth century—that Jews are suspect, subversive, and politically dangerous.

 AUTHOR'S RESPONSE BY PAUL HANEBRINK, RUTGERS UNIVERSITY-NEW BRUNSWICK

Let me begin by saying how grateful I am to Daniel Steinmetz-Jenkins for organizing this roundtable, to Sam Moyn for his introduction, and most importantly to Natalia Aleksiu, Holly Case, Udi Greenberg, Tony Michels, and Gil Rubin for their rich and wide-ranging responses to my book. The tremendous diversity in expertise that they bring to their readings is especially stimulating. Some of their reflections take up issues that were on my mind as I wrote the book, and so invite me to reconsider my views. Others raise questions that I did not see so clearly as I was writing and force me to consider particular aspects in an entirely new light. It is a rare privilege to engage with all their provocations in this forum.

Natalia Aleksiu writes that *A Specter Haunting Europe* makes for “depressingly relevant reading” and offers as illustration a description of a public forum announced (but, thankfully, never held) by Poland’s Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) in Warsaw on the role that Jews played in that country’s Communist-era secret police. The outline of the affair will be familiar to anyone who has followed the politics of historical memory in Eastern Europe since 1989. Debates about Jews in Communist regimes—how prominent were Jewish Communists; what did they do and why; how should Jewish Communists be remembered and judged?—have been recurring features of political and intellectual life in the region since 1989. So have accusations that right-wing nationalists were using these debates to relativize the history of antisemitic violence, to bring toxic anti-Jewish prejudices back into mainstream discourse, and to discredit liberal political values. Without question, the ideological passions aroused by the topic of Judeo-Bolshevism caught my attention already as a young doctoral student doing research in Hungary in the 1990s and inspired me to begin working in earnest on this topic in the early 2000s. And yet, as Aleksiu suggests, the valence of this topic has shifted in recent years, even if the contours (and often the details) of the debate look the same as they did in the first years after 1989. Today, the Judeo-Bolshevik myth has a new relevance that I did not anticipate while I was researching and writing the book.

What changed? According to Holly Case, it was a sense of the direction in which history was supposed to move after 1989. She writes: “When the current Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán moved the political fulcrum of our moment from 1989 to 2008, history was recast to function as a global critique of neoliberalism rather than a global victory of liberalism.” Orbán’s personal trajectory mirrors this shift perfectly. A one-time liberal anti-Communist, he now champions ‘illiberal democracy,’ attacks the European Union, philanthropist/financier George Soros, and humanitarian NGOs as enemies of Christian Europe, and cultivates contacts with authoritarian rulers and far right parties around the world. A second example puts the altered horizon of historical expectation in a different light. When President George H. W. Bush visited Warsaw in the summer of 1989, he declared that Poland had “started along on an ascending path of change—democratic change.”¹ Twenty-eight years later, President Donald Trump also spoke in Poland. But he did not come to herald the prospects for liberal democracy after the fall of Communism. Instead, he warned that Western civilization faced new threats coming from the “inside or out, from the South or the East.” “The fundamental question of our time,” he said, “is whether the West has the will to survive.”² Passages of Trump’s speech were widely interpreted as coded gestures of solidarity with ethno-nationalists in Poland and elsewhere, something it was impossible to imagine in any speech by a U.S. president to an audience in Eastern Europe before 2016.

These are signs that the trans-Atlantic post-Cold War liberal order is eroding. In this changing political context, the issue of Judeo-Bolshevism serves as a powerful counter-memory, or in Aleksiu’s words, a “counter-narrative.” After 1989, the inevitability of liberal democratic transition made remembering the murder of Europe’s Jews in one’s own country, in the words of Tony Judt, a “European entry ticket.”³ By critically confronting the darker chapters of national history, Eastern

¹ President Bush’s Remarks in Warsaw, 9 July 1989, <http://chnm.gmu.edu/1989/items/show/2>, accessed 9 July 2019.

² For the text of Trump’s speech: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/07/06/remarks-president-trump-people-poland-july-6-2017>, accessed 9 July 2019.

³ Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005), 803.

European societies could demonstrate their commitment to a broad set of civic values that included toleration, multiculturalism, and respect for human rights. Today, nationalists in Poland and elsewhere dismiss this moral agenda as a kind of cultural imperialism imported from abroad in ways that they compare to the old Soviet tyranny. Because they have a very different idea of the Europe in which their nations belong, they have chosen to remember a different past—one that they say is truly their “own” and not one imposed on them from outside.

Within this ideological field, demanding an account of the role played by Jewish Communists in national history becomes something more than a call for more historical research. It signals instead a hostility to the norms of an international liberal order, which an ascendant Right across Europe and on both sides of the Atlantic associates variously with the European Union, international NGOs and human rights organizations, or with nameless global intellectual, political, and media elites, or with even vaguer ideological constructions like ‘cultural Marxism’ or ‘gender ideology.’ Today, the Judeo-Bolshevik myth has become more than just another way for the Right in one country to label Jews a threatening national ‘other.’ It is also one sign in a discursive constellation that spans borders, connecting disparate far-right, alt-right, or ethno-populist groups and parties in a transnational anti-democratic network that is now more visible, more active, and more politically potent than it seemed to be in the years after 1989. Engaging the Judeo-Bolshevik on terms the Right has already defined only makes the dog whistle sound more shrilly.

And yet the fact remains: some Jews (at sometimes and in some places) did indeed embrace Communism passionately and zealously. Tony Michels insists quite rightly that historians should not abandon the study of a topic that is so central to the history of Jews in the twentieth century simply because antisemites have made the issue into an ideological weapon. “Historians,” he writes, “will have failed to understand Communism without examining its Jewish dimensions.” In brilliant and rich detail, Michels describes how powerfully immigrant Jews in the United States responded to news of Bolshevik triumph in Russia, and how proudly some of them identified with figures like the Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky. The history of the American Communist Party, he suggests, is unimaginable without the role played by its Jewish members, especially in major centers like New York. A similar story could be told about Communism among other immigrant Jewish communities in places like Britain and Argentina. And there is of course a vast literature on Jews in the Bolshevik revolution and in the Soviet state. All this demands careful and thoughtful historical investigation. Michels concludes that “the challenge is to figure out why Communism attracted many Jews and how their involvement mattered without lending credence to the Judeo-Bolshevik myth.”

The prospect of meeting that challenge has inspired extraordinary scholarship. Tony Michels mentions one important book—Yuri Slezkine’s *The Jewish Century*.⁴ Michels’s own rich body of work is another compelling example.⁵ At the same time, it is clear that the Judeo-Bolshevik myth has thrived in places where there were many Jews and in places where there were few. It has endured in Eastern Europe, even after entire Jewish communities there were destroyed. And it has moved antisemites to invent ‘alternative facts’ when reliable data about how many Jews were Communists did not seem sufficiently alarming. Given its toxic legacy, Judeo-Bolshevism, as conspiracy theory, myth, or trope, must be considered in its own right as an ideological variable and as an object of analysis, even if that myth is interwoven in important ways with the problem of why and when some Jews embraced Communism. At the most fundamental level, I take Michels’s point to be a distinction between the project of writing about the uses and meanings of antisemitism and writing about the rich social and cultural diversity of Jewish political life. I read a great deal about the latter to write this book. But *A Specter Haunting Europe* is clearly an example of the former.

I can, however, offer reflections on some of the ideas and turns of phrase that recur in even some of the very best scholarly writing about Jews and Communism: that Jews were ‘visible’ as leaders of Communist parties; that Jews were ‘over-

⁴ Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 174-203.

⁵ Tony Michels, *A Fire in Their Hearts. Yiddish Socialists in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005) and Michels, ed., *Jewish Radicals. A Documentary History* (New York: New York University Press, 2012).

represented' or 'disproportionately represented' among the members or leading members of Communist parties; and—really, the only sensible general statement we can make—that some Jews were Communists, but that not all Communists were Jews. When polemics fly about Jewish responsibility for Communism, or about the role of Jews in Communist parties and regimes, some of the most heated discussion arises around the question as to how many are 'some'? Most? Only a few? A disproportionately high number? But it is worth pausing to ask a more fundamental question: why are Jews the group that is being counted?

After 1948, the membership rolls of Communist parties exploded across Eastern Europe. It would be entirely possible to say, for example, that during the decades of Communist rule ethnic Poles comprised the vast majority of the party's members in Poland. A similar statement could be made about the ethnic majority in every Communist Party across the bloc. But nobody bothers to say this, because scholars and nationalist ideologues alike agree that it does not tell us anything interesting about the nature of Communist regimes. Instead, research on popular participation in the Communist Peoples' Republics in Eastern Europe has focused on a far different and much more diverse set of issues that include mass mobilization, the impact of state ideology, opportunism, and the presence or absence of coercive pressure.⁶ However, the role in Communist Party politics of ethnic minorities and in particular of Jews as the paradigmatic national 'other' continues to attract enormous attention because it plays into long-running debates (and anxieties) about Jewish loyalty (or disloyalty) to the majority nation, Jewish social mobility within a national society, and Jewish assimilation into or identification with a particular national community. In many ways, the nation-state paradigm continues to influence discussion about the problem of Jews and Communism as much as it has shaped fears about Judeo-Bolshevism.

Similarly, debates about the historical legacy of men like Ernst Thälmann, leader of the German Communist Party during the Weimar Republic, or Erich Honecker, head of the East German Communist Party in the 1970s and 1980s, focus on the discrepancies between the ambiguous realities of the lives they lived and the heroic tales that Communist Party propagandists told about them.⁷ They never appear as 'Germans,' nor is some kind of German identity ever offered as an explanation for their actions, in the way that the Jewishness of the Hungarian Bolshevik Béla Kun or of Jakub Berman, head of the secret police in Stalinist-era Poland, is so often seen as a relevant fact in explaining why they became Communists. It is telling in this regard that, during the Weimar Republic, the German far right labeled the German Spartacist Karl Liebknecht a Jew and not a German, when in fact Liebknecht had no Jewish familial ties whatsoever. They presumed that only a hidden Jewish essence could drive him to become a revolutionary Bolshevik.

Given all this, I tried in *A Specter Haunting Europe* to consider Judeo-Bolshevism as a pan-European phenomenon that circulated back and forth across national boundaries throughout the twentieth century. How could the Jewish Bolshevik figure as a national threat in so many places simultaneously? Of course, this approach comes with certain disadvantages, as Holly Case notes. Tracing the history of an idea "unmoored from material conditions" captures patterns of circulation, imitation, and re-appropriation to great effect. But it also runs the risk of making "individual people, places, and events seem relatively insignificant."

One way to avoid this problem would have been to focus more closely on a particular era and a narrower span of time, in order to examine competing uses of the Judeo-Bolshevik myth with greater nuance and more attention to the social context of a particular place. Indeed, I debated with myself the wisdom of writing just such a study. However, I decided instead to

⁶ Important investigations of this complex problem include: Mark Pittaway, *The Workers' State. Industrial Labor and the Making of Socialist Hungary, 1944-1958* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012); Katherine Lebow, *Unfinished Utopia. Nowa Huta, Stalinism, and Polish Society, 1949-56* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013); Gail Kligman and Katherine Verdery, *Peasants Under Siege: The Collectivization of Romanian Agriculture, 1949-1962* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011); and Melissa Feinberg, *Curtain of Lies. The Battle Over Truth in Stalinist Eastern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

⁷ Peter Monteath, ed., *Ernst Thälmann, Mensch und Mythos* (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 2000); Martin Sabrow, *Erich Honecker. Das Leben davor, 1912-1945* (München: C.H. Beck, 2016).

follow Judeo-Bolshevism across a much broader swathe of time and space, in order to show how the same myth functioned in very different eras. One advantage of this approach, which I admit has become clearer to me since 2016 than it was before, is that it highlights the ways in which far-right politics have always had a transnational dimension. Much attention has been paid recently to the ways in which the contemporary white power movements in different parts of the world share ideas with each other on social media platforms like 4Chan or Reddit. But fears of Judeo-Bolshevism proliferated just as readily in the 1920s, driven by the circulation of books, articles, émigrés, visual images, and rumors. Recognizing this seems essential to me, in order to better discern what is truly new in far-right politics today, what are continuities, and what are imitations or re-appropriations of extremism's past.

This brings me to questions raised by Udi Greenberg and Gil Rubin in particular. First and foremost, what is really left of Judeo-Bolshevism today? As they both rightly observe, the coordinates of contemporary antisemitism are very different than they were when the Judeo-Bolshevik myth was at the center of political life across Europe. The financier George Soros has replaced the revolutionary Leon Trotsky as the face of Jewish conspiracy. Old slanders about Jews and money have new power in the aftermath of the global recession of 2008.⁸ Debates about antisemitism, whether among leftists like British Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn or among Islamic radicals in France and elsewhere, are dominated by the issue of anti-Zionism. And the current Israeli government has made common cause with far-right parties across Europe, united by a shared anti-Muslim politics. Absent the Communist threat, specific invocations of Judeo-Bolshevism are most prominent in debates about the past, not about the present. Often, they come across as tics or reflex actions that antisemites cannot shake. Examples of antisemitism abound in contemporary politics. But do any of them have anything to do with Judeo-Bolshevism?

As a first response, I would say that the Judeo-Bolshevik myth persisted in post-1945 Western Europe even more broadly than I was able to show in the book and that the concerns about alien and dangerous Jewishness that it crystalized were effectively transmitted to younger generations within far-right milieus in ways that we need to understand better. The Taras Borodajkewycz affair in mid-1960s Austria is a good example of what I mean.⁹ Borodajkewycz was an ex-Nazi Party member who taught economic history after 1945 at the College of World Trade in Vienna. By the early 1960s he had acquired a reputation as a professor who made openly antisemitic statements during his lectures. Rosa Luxemburg, he said many times, was a "Jewish aggravator of the masses;" Karl Marx was, for him, simply a Jew.¹⁰ Far right students flocked to his lectures; antifascists condemned them. In 1965, trade unions, students, and former members of the Austrian resistance organized a demonstration against him; members of the student organization of the far-right Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) marched to support him. The ensuing clashes resulted in the death of a Communist who had been active in the wartime antifascist underground and sparked a debate in Austria about the legacy of Nazism. For a long time, it was possible to see the affair as one of the many postwar Holocaust controversies that slowly and belatedly helped to shape the emerging memory of the Shoah across Europe. Given recent political events, however, we might do better to revisit episodes like these in order to ask how the attitudes of 1930s and 1940s era fascists were transmitted (in perhaps modified form) to younger generations of far-right parties and organizations active across Europe today.¹¹

Yet Greenberg is quite right. Liberal anti-Communism in the Cold War West was dramatically different from the crusade against Judeo-Bolshevism that Hitler waged, even if Cold War anti-Communism allowed many ex-Nazis to rewrite their

⁸ Farah Nayeri, "A Museum Tackles Myths about Jews and Money," *New York Times* (20 March 2019).

⁹ Rafael Kropiunigg, *Eine österreichische Affäre. Der Fall Borodajkewycz* (Vienna: Czernin Verlag, 2015).

¹⁰ Kropiunigg, "The Rehabilitated Austrians and the Borodajkewycz Affair," *Austrian History Yearbook* 46 (2015): 360-385; here, 363.

¹¹ An important start is Andrea Mammone, *Transnational Neofascism in France and Italy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

biographies and remake their careers. I describe in the book how fears of Asiatic Bolshevism persisted well into the postwar era. But the ideological position of Judaism was dramatically transformed. Once demonized as the source of Bolshevik perfidy, it was now valorized as an important fount of “Judeo-Christian civilization.”¹² (It is worth noting, however, that the secular Jew remained a suspicious figure, and that some of the European Christians most devoted to reimagining the relationship between Christianity and Judaism after the Holocaust could still sniff at the role that “spiritually dead” Jews played in modern life.)¹³ As Greenberg asks, “If the original Jewish-Communist myth proved so malleable, how can we measure its actual significance for ideological projects that substantially edited it and adapted it?”

Rubin’s proposal to identify two distinct but politically and ideologically entangled “traditions of thinking about Judeo-Bolshevism” seems promising to me. Rubin suggests that we can distinguish between the conspiratorial element at the heart of the Judeo-Bolshevik myth and another “softer” version of Judeo-Bolshevism that crystallizes around different social or cultural phenomena (for example, secularism) that come to be associated with Jews. This appeals to me because it brings clarity to two important issues regarding the afterlife of the Judeo-Bolshevik myth.

First, there are clear continuities between contemporary panic about migration and demographic or cultural replacement and the fears of Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy that exploded across Europe after World War I. During the Polish-Soviet war, propaganda posters produced by the Polish Ministry of War portrayed Leon Trotsky, the Jewish Bolshevik devil, commanding a mob of Asiatic Red Army soldiers to burn towns and slaughter innocents. When Hitler declared war on the Soviet Union, Nazi propagandists warned that Jewish-Bolshevik commissars planned to lead a horde of Asiatic sub-humans in a war to destroy European civilization. This link between antisemitism and other forms of racism endured in neo-Nazi circles, as Kathleen Belew has observed.¹⁴ In texts like the 1978 white supremacist novel *The Turner Diaries* that have become touchstones for the contemporary white power movement, Jews often figure as masterminds helping non-white peoples to overthrow white communities and then replace them. Today, the trope of the Jewish puppet-master leading and directing hordes of non-European invaders is a fundamental element in the demonization of George Soros within far right and alt-right circles on both sides of the Atlantic. In anti-Soros campaigns from Hungary to the studios of Fox News, as well as in the apocalyptic visions of white power terrorists, Soros is typically depicted as a mastermind directing a web of liberal non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and humanitarian organizations eager to use liberal human rights talk to weaken Europe’s Christian nations and to promote the immigration of non-Europeans. Of course, Soros is a wealthy billionaire, not a Bolshevik. But studying how the Judeo-Bolshevik myth operated in the past enables us to see more clearly the continued association of Jews with fears about the replacement of (white) Western civilization by a new racial dystopia.

At the same time, the shifting meaning of ‘Judeo-Christianity’ demonstrates how malleable certain elements of the Judeo-Bolshevik myth were. The idea of Judeo-Christian civilization was created by reevaluating the relationship between Jews and a series of concepts that included secularism and Communism. Once cast as agents of secularism and therefore of revolution, Jews and Judaism became allies after 1945 in the fight against them, a shift driven by the rise of an anti-totalitarian politics that saw Communism and Nazism as equal enemies. Amorphous and vague though it may have been, the idea of Judeo-Christian civilization was a powerful force for Jewish inclusion, especially at the height of the Cold War. However, its coherence (and the ease with which it replaced Judeo-Bolshevism in the West as a frame for understanding Communism) rested on a vision, shared by a broad spectrum of political actors in the middle of the twentieth century, that secularism was a paramount threat to the social and cultural order on which ‘Western civilization’ rested.

¹² Hanebrink, *Specter*, 200-237.

¹³ Paul Hanebrink, “Christian Human Rights and the Jews,” *The Immanent Frame* (16 June 2015), <https://tif.ssrc.org/2015/06/16/christian-human-rights-and-the-jews/>, accessed 9 July 2019.

¹⁴ Kathleen Belew, *Bring the War Home. The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018).

After the religious crisis of the 1960s, and the widespread decline in patterns of religious observance across most of Europe, secularism no longer seems the same kind of enemy.¹⁵ Consequently, the meaning of 'Judeo-Christian civilization' has changed, as Greenberg notes. Shorn of its religious origins, Judeo-Christianity lives on primarily as a language of civilizational defense, an exclusionary ideology directed against Muslims rather than Communists and closely linked in places like Hungary to an older language of Christian nationalism and Christian Europe once directed against Jews (and Judeo-Bolshevism). Islamophobia and antisemitism are not the same, nor are Muslims the new Jews of Europe. The histories of anti-Jewish and anti-Islamic stereotypes and persecution are different in fundamental ways. And yet a history of the Judeo-Bolshevik myth illuminates the ways in which the figure of an ethno-ideological enemy crystallized a variety of anxieties that were central to twentieth-century political life. Thirty years after the Cold War, far right activists are bundling new fears about lost sovereignty, demographic replacement, and civilizational decline around different kinds of sinister and threatening figures, from the cultural Marxist to the Muslim migrant. Perhaps thinking about the origins and power of the Judeo-Bolshevik myth in the previous century can help us better understand the construction of new ethno-ideological enemies in our own.

¹⁵ Hugh McLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).