

Preface

The hope of having a Europe free of Antisemitism after the Second World War proved to be no more than wishful thinking. The same was specifically true with regard to Germany. However, when the impact of Nazi propaganda weakened and the country – particularly its western part – began to enjoy long years of prosperity and an ever better functioning democracy, liberal anti-Antisemitic forces appeared to have gained the upper hand. It was later on, following the most recent wave of refugees, who were crossing the borders into Germany in 2015, that the far Right began to agitate as it had never done for decades and predictably, Antisemitism followed suit. At the same time, critics of Israel on the Left often seemed to cross the fine line separating this critique from sheer Antisemitism and one wondered how far would such criticism – legitimate, though sometimes excessive or disproportionate – be still considered decent in post-Nazi Germany.

Meanwhile, the debate was also manifested in a growing interest in the *history* of Antisemitism. It is in this context that I thought to contribute to the discussion by offering a collection of my studies and essays on this topic, written during the last fifty years. I hoped that by presenting them together, old insights would be recovered and new ones gained. This book includes works dealing with various aspects of Antisemitism in Germany since the late 1870s. It documents the way I have proceeded in studying this phenomenon and brings to the reader the fruits of my efforts in an orderly way, usually though not always chronologically.

As I was preparing this volume for publication, I quickly realized that I could not possibly update such a corpus, considering the huge bibliography that has meanwhile been assembled and the changes that have occurred in my own interests and my own views on this theme during the last fifty years. Instead, I decided to leave the collected pieces as they were with only few corrections and some stylistic improvements. This does create a certain amount of repetition, but it seems to me unavoidable. In addition, I have also left the notes practically unchanged and only slightly shortened. Naturally, these notes refer to literature that may now seem outdated. But this is not always the case. Having seen how even outstanding masterpieces are being forgotten in the face of so much new research, I hope that younger historians will find useful and interesting material in my somewhat antiquated apparatus. Hebrew and German texts have been translated by me, unless otherwise indicated, and the sources for all previously published texts are given, with thanks, at the end of the book. As for the term Antisemitism: I am using it despite recent efforts to provide ever more precise definitions of this term and even suggestions to avoid it altogether. I find the discussion on terminology more distracting than productive. Moreover, I do not believe it is in our

hands, as historians, to dispose of the term even when we wish to do so. Here, in any case, I have decided to use the unhyphenated form, since in this way it clearly denotes hatred of or opposition to Jews and to Judaism, not to some undefined Semites. For the sake of uniformity, I have replaced other ways of spelling it everywhere, even in my own previous texts.

Naturally, during a period of so many years, I have been helped by innumerable colleagues and profited from discussions with many of them or from reading their related works. Equally important for me were my many graduate students in four decades of intense teaching at Tel Aviv University. A few of them are mentioned in the notes, but I am deeply thankful to all of them. In preparing this book, I was helped by the editor of the series in which it appears, Professor Vivian Liska, who accepted the book with warmth and followed its progress throughout with useful advice. Dr. Ulrike Krauss and Mrs. Katja Lehming from the DeGruyter publishing house, were likewise welcoming and helpful. I am deeply grateful to all three of them. The careful work done by Ms. Anna Leah Berstein Simpson, my English language editor, and by Mr. Luis Gruhler in Munich, who did some translating and much too much proofreading and technical work, was indispensable. I thank them both most especially.

In working on this book, realizing its auto-biographical sub-text, I am often reminded of my esteemed teacher at Berkeley, an outstanding historian, a friend and mentor, Hans Rosenberg. Everything of value that I know about history I have learned from him. This book is dedicated to his memory.

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