

# Preface and Acknowledgements

Antisemitism has an age-old tradition. The “longest hatred”<sup>1</sup> can be traced back into ancient times, continued through the Middle Ages into modernity and reached its peak during the Nazi era. While one might assume that the atrocities of the Shoah would have resulted in an ideological about-face, antisemitism, on the contrary, is on the rise globally yet again. Today, the unfathomable tradition of discrimination against Jews, insults, and antisemitic hate crimes is carried out by political, religious, and lay groups from all sides of the political spectrum. Many of them are drawing on historical traditions of antisemitic discrimination and of stereotyping Jews as the scapegoats for a multitude of past and present societal problems. Given this unacceptable reality, in February 2018, approximately one thousand scholars, activists, decision makers, and influencers met in Vienna at the conference “An End to Antisemitism!” The conference was jointly organized by the European Jewish Congress, New York University, Tel Aviv University, and the University of Vienna to study antisemitism with an unprecedented interdisciplinary breadth and historical depth. Over 150 presenters from all over the world engaged with all forms of antisemitism from a variety of perspectives. The present series, *An End to Antisemitism!*, documents the conference’s output and research results from various fields. Leading experts in religious studies, history, political studies, social sciences, philosophy, psychology, pedagogy, and cultural studies shed light on antisemitic traditions from all their respective viewpoints. Together, they help to shape a discourse of understanding, knowing, and recognizing various forms of antisemitism in order to confront and combat them.

One of the aims of the conference “An End to Antisemitism!” was, therefore, to create concrete policy recommendations regarding how to effectively combat antisemitism. These have been collected and published in a separate *Catalogue of Policies*,<sup>2</sup> a document of practical impact. They also form one of the bases of the first volume of the present series.<sup>3</sup> All subsequent volumes are addressed to an academic audience. They document the research leading to these policy recommendations.

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1 R. S. Wistrich, *Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred* (London: Methuen, 1991).

2 A. Lange, A. Muzicant, D. Porat, L. H. Schiffman, and M. Weitzman, *An End to Antisemitism! A Catalogue of Policies to Combat Antisemitism* (Brussels: European Jewish Congress, 2018).

3 A. Lange, K. Mayerhofer, D. Porat, and L. H. Schiffman, eds., *Comprehending and Confronting Antisemitism: A Multi-Faceted Approach*, vol. 1 of *An End to Antisemitism!* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019).

The present volume focuses on the history of antisemitism. Its contributions document historical traditions that have fed contemporary antisemitism and unearth different motivations for antisemitic persecution through the ages. As such, they scrutinize antisemitism's versatile nature and multiple transformations. Following a five-part chronological structure, the articles in the present volume trace antisemitism from antiquity to the Middle Ages, from the eighteenth century to the Nazi era and the Shoah, from the end of World War II to the founding of the State of Israel, and well into our present time where the internet and modern media have contributed beyond measure to the increase of Jew-hatred.

The contributors' theoretical approaches vary in accordance with the topics and research fields their articles engage with and come from. Some contributions follow a classical historiographical path, working with original sources to trace historical traditions of antisemitism or document historical events and incidences. Other articles, however, chose a more metatheoretical approach, going beyond a documentation alone. Rather, they investigate historical manifestations of antisemitism to find answers to questions about pre-modern perceptions of race and racism as well as to learn about different motivations for antisemitic discrimination in order to establish means for combatting current-day Jew-hatred. A general introduction to the volume brings together these different approaches as well as theoretical aspects of the history and historiography of antisemitism.

A project like this volume, and the whole series, surely cannot be completed without the assistance of other individuals. Therefore, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to a list of people who have supported us in shaping this volume and bringing it to life.

First, we would like to give a word of thanks to all our colleagues who have contributed to the present volume. Their research documents a vast interdisciplinarity of fields that makes not only the present volume but the complete series *An End to Antisemitism!* an unparalleled publication.

We are grateful to De Gruyter Publishers for accepting our five-volume series of conference proceedings for publication. The support that Albrecht Döhnert, Sophie Wagenhofer, and Alice Meroz gave us in preparing these mammoth proceedings for publication has been exemplary. The same gratitude is due to Anna Cwikla. As with all previous volumes, she has made an enormous effort in proof-reading, copyediting, and English stylizing.

The other editors are especially grateful to Kerstin Mayerhofer for taking the lead in editing our proceedings. Her commitment has been unparalleled, and without her, neither the present volume nor the other outcomes of the conference would exist.

Of course, a project like this requires significant funds, which are often surprisingly difficult to raise. It is therefore more than a pleasure to express our gratitude to our main sponsor Moshe Kantor, President of the European Jewish Congress. Moshe Kantor provided much needed financial support not only for the conference “An End to Antisemitism!” in 2018 but also for all its printed outcomes. At the same time, we would also like to take the opportunity to convey words of thanks to all other sponsors as listed on pages 485–86.

Many more people have been involved in the project. They participated in the conference in 2018 and have supported us in the preparation of the conference proceedings. All their names are listed in volume one of *An End to Antisemitism!*<sup>4</sup>

New York, Tel Aviv, and Vienna, November 17, 2020

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<sup>4</sup> Lange, Mayerhofer, Porat, and Schiffman, *Comprehending and Confronting Antisemitism*, xi–xvii.

