

***Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism
Indiana University***

Announces

Contending with Antisemitism in a Changing Political Climate:

An International Scholars' Conference

Indiana University, Bloomington

March 23-27, 2019

Call for Papers

Quiescent for a time following the persecution and mass murder of the Jews during the Nazi period, antisemitism has reawakened energetically in our own day and shows no signs of abating. It is imperative that we understand its most serious contemporary manifestations and devise ways to contend with the threats they pose today and are likely to present in the immediate future. This conference will pursue both of these goals, focusing, in particular, on increased hostility toward Jews in a rapidly changing political climate.

The democratic values that took hold in many countries in the decades following the end of World War II are under threat today from extreme movements within the political right, the political left, and political Islam, or Islamism. The rise of populism, nativism, nationalism, authoritarianism, theocratic extremism, and historical revisionism suggest that we have entered a new and highly fraught historical moment. Far from being firmly and permanently established, the acclaimed virtues of life in the free and open societies of the democratic West and other parts of the world now face serious challenges.

At such a time, and often in the name of high ideals, ideological movements of various kinds seek to win a new and more prominent place in intellectual, political, and social life. Some of these movements shape aggressively hostile attitudes to people considered alien, suspicious, undesirable, and unwanted. Jews have historically been targeted in such a way and, with the resurgence of antisemitism in recent years, they are so once again.

A major aim of this conference will be to better understand today's antisemitism against a backdrop of rising nationalism and illiberalism on the right, new forms of intolerance and anti-liberal movements on the left, and militant deeds and demands on the part of political Islam. In addition to clarifying the role that antisemitism plays within the framework of these developments, we will seek to formulate ways to effectively contend with the most threatening manifestations of anti-Jewish hostility in our day and in the period ahead.

Questions to be covered might include:

- What are the reigning ideologies that advance present-day anti-Jewish hatreds at their most wide-spread and intense? What is the nature of their appeal? And what needs to be done to counter them?
- What motivates the most dangerous forms of anti-Jewish hostility today, including that directed against Israel? Who are its major proponents? And how, if at all, can one effectively respond to what they say and do?
- Is antisemitism best understood as just another form of “racism,” “prejudice,” “xenophobia,” or “intolerance,” all of which have been on the rise in recent years, or should it be seen as a separate phenomenon, with its own history, character, motives, language, consequences, etc.? How does contemporary hostility to Jews resemble other forms of social hostility? How does it differ from them?
- In certain circles, antisemitism is expressed through overt aggressive statements and acts. In others, it is more implied, indirect, unacknowledged, and denied. It is easier to understand the former, but how can we best deal with the latter, which is not only real but, in the academy, journalism, and some religious institutions, both invasive and pervasive?
- How important are antisemitism, anti-Zionism, and Holocaust denial and minimization in the agendas of the new populist parties on both the political right and political left? How should we understand and assess the attitudes of these parties to Jews, Zionism, and Israel?
- What explains the extreme Islamist hostility to Jews and the Jewish state? What is being done within Muslim countries and communities to oppose this hatred? Who are the most notable Muslim thinkers and writers who have written or spoken out against Islamist antisemitism? How influential are they?
- In addition to understanding antisemitism, it is imperative to resist it. What are the most effective strategies to carry out such resistance today? What are the leading countervailing forces—the people, ideas, and institutions that

express sympathy and support for Jews and stand actively against antisemitism in its various contemporary forms, including anti-Zionism?

This conference will provide opportunity to explore and debate these and related questions in their historical, ideological, political, psychological, religious, and cultural dimensions.

Papers are invited from younger scholars as well as more senior scholars. For oral presentation at the conference, papers will be restricted to 25- 30 minutes. For possible inclusion in a projected volume of edited conference proceedings, papers should be 20-25 pages, double-spaced.

Instructions for Submitting Paper Proposals: Please send detailed proposals to Alvin H. Rosenfeld (rosenfel@indiana.edu), together with your curriculum vitae, by June 1, 2018. Proposals should be no longer than 2 typed pages, double-spaced. Decisions about acceptance will be sent to applicants by September 1, 2018.

Academic Advisory Board: Chaired by Alvin H. Rosenfeld, this committee will read and assess conference paper proposals. Members include: Doron Ben-Atar (Fordham University), Bruno Chaouat (University of Minnesota), Günther Jikeli (Indiana University), and Elhanan Yakira (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem).

Expenses: Those presenting papers who require financial assistance can apply to the *Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism*, c/o Alvin H. Rosenfeld, for coverage of conference-related travel, food, and accommodations costs. We will do our best to help meet at least some of your needs.

Alvin H. Rosenfeld

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