

Presenter: Marc Neugröschel, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Title: “**Antisemitism and anti-Americanism on the Internet**”

Panel: Internet and Anti-Semitism

A convergence of antisemitism and anti-Americanism is not only evident in the fact that Jews and America are often being slandered concomitantly by the same actors, but also in a comprehensive worldview in which Jews and America are symbiotic constituents of a cosmic nemesis in the way of humanity’s redemption. This ideology gave rise to a semiotic system in which Jews, America and Israel became interchangeable codes, signifying an evil conspiracy responsible for all the major problems of the world. When people “evoke America, nowadays they often mean ‘Jewish power’ – ‘domination’ of Hollywood, the media, high finance, the Congress, the Pentagon, and the White House by American Jewry.”<sup>1</sup> Andrei Markovits suggests that antisemitism and anti-Americanism “have gone hand in hand since at least the early 19th century”.<sup>2</sup> While antisemitism is officially outlawed in dominant discourse, it can be communicated more uninhibitedly than elsewhere on the internet, a platform less regulated and controlled than other media.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, Monika Schwarz-Friesel highlights the fact that in Germany “throughout the past 10 years, anti-Semitic content in comments on the internet and in letters to editors has almost tripled.”<sup>4</sup> Hence, looking at the internet is crucial for endeavors to capture the manifestation of antisemitic ideas, including those that intertwine with anti-Americanism. I am going to present a variety of examples including cartoons, Facebook posts, You Tube Video and Contributions to discussion forums on various web sites with all kind of political orientations in order to illustrate the different ways in which ideas of America and the Jews are used complementary or interchangeably to imagine an omnipresent evil force that needs to be defeated for the sake of humanity’s emancipation. In the course of this presentation I will elaborate on various models that explain the convergence of antisemitism and anti-Americanism, reaching from theories about protest against modernity to identity-related approaches. I

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<sup>1</sup> R. S. Wistrich, *From Ambivalence to Betrayal: The Left, the Jews, and Israel* (Jerusalem: Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> A. S. Markovits, *Uncouth Nation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> M. Schwarz-Friesel, „Hass via Internet,“ in *Sprache und Kommunikation im technischen Zeitalter. Wieviel Internet (v)erträgt unsere Gesellschaft?*, ed. K. Marx, M. Schwarz-Friesel (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013).

<sup>4</sup> M. Neugröschel, “European anti-Semites increasingly playing victim in classic ‘perpetrator inversion,’ says expert.” Interview with Monika Schwarz-Friesel. *Times of Israel*. October 5, 2016. Accessed May 10, 2017. <http://www.timesofisrael.com/european-anti-semite-increasingly-playing-victim-in-classic-perpetrator-inversion-says-expert/>

will employ the empirical examples from the internet in order to discuss, corroborate and question the various explanatory models that exist in this regard.