

BOOK REVIEWS

ARKEL, DIK VAN. *The Drawing of the Mark of Cain. A Socio-Historical Analysis of the Growth of Anti-Jewish Stereotypes*. Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 2009. 592 pp. €49.50; doi:10.1017/S0020859011000204

On 30 June 2010 retired history professor Dik van Arkel passed away at the age of eighty-five. In late 2009 his work on the history of anti-Semitism was published, following an extended gestation period and a lifetime of contemplating anti-Jewish stereotypes, the power of prejudices, and the conditions under which they may lead to persecution, violence, and murder. In the 1980s Van Arkel wrote a few preliminary inspirational articles on the subject, and during the same period supervised a like-minded interdisciplinary working group dedicated to Historical Racism Studies. This book has come about thanks to a few members of this group: the editors H. Floris Cohen, Leo Lucassen, Robert Ross, as well as the author of an introduction and a historiographical epilogue, Chris Quispel, merit considerable praise.

This is not a history of anti-Semitism over the centuries aimed at offering a fairly comprehensive chronological overview. Van Arkel specialized in a few specific periods and regions, from the rise of Christianity through the Middle Ages, consistently highlighting the course of events in western Europe, especially in the precursors to present-day England, Germany, Austria, and Italy. Applying his impressive knowledge of these detailed histories, he constructs a theory intended to apply universally about the growth factors of anti-Semitism and other forms of racism – patterns that Van Arkel considers to be closely related. This knowledge about the growth factors also encompasses opposing views and trends, as well as a keen perception of the periods in which Jews and non-Jews in different countries and regions were on good terms with one another. Van Arkel's theory is thus useful for analysing contemporary movements against minorities, as well as for formulating specific recommendations about how to restrain racist organizations and trends.

His personal motivation is the history of Nazi anti-Semitism and its consequences in Germany and the Netherlands, which he observed as a schoolboy and a student. "I became vehemently anti-Nazi very early on", he revealed in one of his last interviews. These strong feelings were an immediate consequence of getting to know German-Jewish physicists in his parents' circle of friends (his father worked for Philips) and of losing his own Jewish friends and acquaintances during the Nazi persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands.

Van Arkel presents some original concepts, such as "secession friction", as he describes the relationship between Jews and Christians; "terrorizing the discriminant", as he describes the compulsion among bystanders to participate in the discrimination and persecution; and the "genealogy of stereotypes", as he designates the dynamics and flexibility of anti-Jewish stereotyping, which are stronger, more contradictory, more manifold, and more irrational with respect to Jews than to other minorities.

There are both optimistic and pessimistic approaches to studying racism and anti-Semitism, and Van Arkel adopts both in his work. His analysis of daily interactions between Jews and non-Jews and between minorities and majorities in general is optimistic; he is convinced that such interaction will have a corrective impact on stigmatization and stereotyping. Whether this impact is universal is a matter of opinion; sociological analyses of

what is known as the contact thesis have repeatedly noted that inter-ethnic or inter-religious contact has a manifold effect. Van Arkel provides convincing examples of situations where church leaders prohibited their adherents from engaging in daily contact with Jews following a period of fraternal coexistence. Violence against Jews comes about more easily when contact with non-Jews is prohibited or curtailed through other means.

Van Arkel is pessimistic about the opportunities for effective prevention of anti-Jewish campaigns and tendencies. When irrational anti-Jewish sentiments become pervasive, the majority of non-Jews soon cease to be receptive to reason. This may rapidly give rise to very dangerous and violent situations to which few objections are raised.

Aside from observing several similarities in their dynamics, Van Arkel identifies a difference between anti-Jewish and anti-black forms of racism, which he attributes to differences in stereotypes and labour-market positions. He bases his explanation on the history of enslaved Africans and black Americans, who were forced to perform life-long, unpaid hereditary forced labour sanctioned by legislation. The owners had reason to want those whom they had designated as their property to continue to work and therefore to remain alive. No such vested interest existed, according to Van Arkel, with respect to the Jews, who had been excluded from the regular labour market since the Middle Ages. Their exclusion and the more radical social distance made them far more vulnerable to violence. Due to these economically specific factors, violence against Jews escalated more quickly and more easily into murder and extermination.

The comparison is generally convincing, although Van Arkel ignores the changes in the history of the trans-Atlantic slave trade before and during the nineteenth century. Until then, no obstacles impeded the supply of enslaved Africans to plantation societies in the Americas. Later on the situation changed, and the previously simple replacement of those who died could no longer be taken for granted. The extent of violence during this history of centuries is manifested by the dehumanizing terminology designating those who were enslaved, who until the early nineteenth century were described not as people but as goods, furniture, items, or even livestock.

With all forms of racism, any type of authority – national, local, as well as leadership in organizations, informal and individual contexts, and families – is crucial for identifying exclusion and preventing stereotyping. The elementary force of anti-Semitism and racism has consistently been underestimated throughout history, Van Arkel rightly emphasizes. Such underestimation may easily give rise to dangerous situations. Anti-Semitism and racism tend to be disassociated from one's own society, for example, and often fail to be recognized in one's own surroundings or circle. Racist movements capitalize on this tendency to expand their support base. Many Germans, according to Van Arkel, voted for the NSDAP without being anti-Semitic themselves. In the months preceding their coup in 1933, the Nazis toned down their anti-Jewish propaganda, as they did during the 1936 Olympics.

Van Arkel considers at length why the Jews were the ones to be stigmatized. There is no single anti-Jewish stigma, but rather a multiplicity of stigmas, which resemble a spectrum. The element of this spectrum that is emphasized in a given situation is determined by what Van Arkel calls "ideological adequacy". He therefore views anti-Semitism as an ideology, aimed at changing an existing social order deemed undesirable, or rather at maintaining one considered to be desirable. Van Arkel demonstrates that whichever anti-Jewish image appeared to be the most adequate, effective, and appealing is retrieved and applied.

The tendency of the majority to regard a stereotyped minority as homogeneous is an additional factor. Anti-Semites will continue to view Jews first, foremost, and ultimately as Jews, while racists will always view blacks as blacks; diversity within the group being

stereotyped is not acknowledged. This makes for heavily restricted and often one-sided interactions. Van Arkel refers to “labelled interaction” between majority and minority, as a phenomenon that perpetuates the stereotype. Not only in periods of severe discrimination or under a racist regime, but also long after violence has ceased, interactions may continue to be marked by discomfort and unease, as a consequence of being one-sided.

Promoting unconstrained, versatile, and manifold forms of contact between the majority and minorities in Europe wherever possible is of ongoing interest, given the pronounced historical tendencies that Van Arkel has gathered and presented so convincingly in his masterpiece.

Dienke Hondius

MINCZELES, HENRI. *Le mouvement ouvrier juif. Récit des origines.* [Yiddishland.] Éditions Syllepse, Paris 2010. 220 pp. €22.00; doi:10.1017/S0020859011000277

The author was born in Paris in 1926 of Jewish parents from Poland. His father was deported during the war and was murdered in Auschwitz. The fate of his father and so many of his family and friends inspired him to dedicate his life to the history of the vanished world of his ancestors. He studied social sciences and history, became a journalist and author of many works on the history of the Jews in Poland and Lithuania. He was particularly interested in the history of the Jewish workers’ movement, and published his *Histoire générale du Bund: un mouvement révolutionnaire juif* in 1995. This was the first integral history of the movement in all its international ramifications. After more than twenty-five years of preoccupation with the subject, Minczeles aims in this book to recapitulate the origins of the movement up until the foundation of the Bund in Vilno in 1897.

The book starts with an overview of the history of the Jews in the Russian empire. After the division of Poland at the end of the eighteenth century, when the Jews from Poland, the Ukraine, and Lithuania were incorporated in the Russian empire, it was the intention of the tsars to induce the Jews to convert to the Orthodox faith and give up their own language and culture. But the Jews resisted every attempt of forced Russification and were punished by ever-growing restrictions in all spheres of life. By the end of the nineteenth century, Russian Jews lived crammed in great poverty with little or no hope to better their lot, crowded as they were in the Pale of Settlement, a restricted area which they were not allowed to leave to settle in other parts of the empire.

Though quite a few Jewish students and young intellectuals were attracted by the underground Russian socialist movements, the new ideologies only slowly found support among Jewish workers in the tobacco and textile industries and in the many small workshops. From 1870 onwards, the struggle for better working conditions started and several strikes occurred in the industrial regions of Poland and the Pale. In spite of the constant danger of arrest and exile to Siberia, the socialist movement took hold of the minds and hearts of the Jewish workers.

The foundation of the Jewish Workers’ Union in Russia and Poland, shortly called Bund (Yiddish for Union) in Vilna in 1897 was the result of a long and difficult process of growing awareness of the particularity of the situation of the Jewish workers in the Russian empire. The early Russian socialists and populists, among whom were some Jewish revolutionaries, thought that political and social reforms in Russia would put an