

BETWEEN REALITY AND MYTH:
THE DEBATES ABOUT THE ISRAEL LOBBY IN THE
UNITED STATES AND ITS IMAGE IN THE CONTEXT OF
AMERICAN CONSPIRACY NARRATIVE

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INTRODUCTION

Recently, the subject of conspiracy theories gained significant prominence in Western, and especially American, scholarship. New approaches to researching the political culture of contemporary societies have demonstrated the crucial influence of subconscious attitudes in shaping group cohesion and national self-awareness.¹ Thus, conspirological discourse appeared to be one of the crucial elements in the growth of nationalistic feelings and the increase of group cohesion. Even the national history of certain countries was examined from the point of view of conspirological mentality.

Richard Hofstadter is one of the first scholars, who became interested in the role of conspiracy theories in American history. His essay *The Paranoid Style in American Politics* was the first attempt to trace a conspirological mentality through the political history of the United States. Since that time a lot of publications describing “paranoid mentality” and its influence on American nation have been issued. These intense explorations allowed scholars to draw the conclusion that the conspirological mentality in America is even older than the United States itself. European immigrants from Old World, primarily Puritans, brought their fears and traditional beliefs to the New World, thus, creating a whole tradition of suspecting “both neighbors and strangers of secret alliances and dangerous plots.”² Further groups of immigrants only strengthened this tradition, gradually contributing to the national repertoire of enemies.

At the same time, the unique cultural diversity, though it predated the creation of conspirological mentality, created specific circumstances for the successful progress of Jewish community, that had long been the object of suspicion in the European tradition. Being one

¹ Jack Zeljko Bratich, “Grassy-Knoll Edges: Conspiracy theories and political rationality in the 1990-s” (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2001), 1-2.

² Robert A. Goldberg, *Enemies within: The Culture of Conspiracy in Modern America* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2002), 2.

“other” among many, the American Jewish community enjoyed a prosperous and tranquil life until the end of the nineteenth century. However, even at the turn of the century when anti-Jewish sentiments and antisemitic conspiracy theories became a dominant in public life, American Jews had enough capacity to defend themselves from allegations, based on the notion of “Jewish conspiracy” as well.

The Second World War is fairly considered as a determinantal event in the history of Western civilization. The reversal of the framework of international relations designated the beginning of Cold War, whereas the ferociousness of Nazi regime in Europe caused a reconsideration of the value of human life. In the history of the American Jewish community, the post-World War II period is commonly referred to as a “Golden Era”. The absence of any kind of artificial socioeconomic barriers and the gradual decline of anti-Jewish attitudes has made the United States an important state for the entire Jewish civilization. Moreover, the alliance with Israel, established in 1948, was conditioned geopolitically and the same system of values contributed to the strong public support of Israel amongst Americans.

However, the post-World War II period in American history is notable for its gradual introduction of conspiracy theories into the public discourse. Based on the suspicion and general disappointment in the politics of the federal government, conspirological discourse became a relatively fashionable trend, and has been popularized in the media, popular culture and literature of the country. At the same time, modern communication facilities increased the circulation of various conspiracy theories exponentially, and in the last 20 years the Internet actually became “a Petrie dish for conspiracies.”³

The actual widespread occurrence of conspiracy theories apparently included traditional ideas of the “World Jewish conspiracy” that in new circumstances took different

³ Richard Landes, “Mainstreaming Conspiracy Theories I: Culture Wars, Moral Equivalence and Suicidal Paradigms” (Paper presented at the conference on *Antisemitism, Multi-culturalism and Ethnic Identity* at Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel, June 16, 2006), <http://www.theaugeanstables.com/2006/06/18/mainstreaming-conspiracy-theories-culture-wars-moral-equivalence-and-suicidal-paradigms.html> (accessed May 11, 2009).

forms. Though antisemitic attitudes did not disappear in the United States completely, being preserved basically in specific groups of society (such as white supremacists or Black communities), American antisemitism appears to a certain extent to be in the background of the “international antisemitism problem”.

In that sense, the single cases when Israel or the American Jewish community happens to be found in the center of controversy (such as in the case of the working paper by John Mearsheimer and Steven Walt *The Israel Lobby and the U.S. Foreign Policy*), it inevitably poses the question to what extent these critiques of Israeli politics appear to be antisemitic. Moreover, recent political events in the United States again and again put the Israel Lobby in the spotlight and nourish innumerable conspiracy theories. Thus, the recent withdrawal of Charles Freeman for the new chairman of the National Intelligence Council once again demonstrated to what extent American public opinion is ready to slide into conspiracy myth creation when the discussion drifts toward the Israel lobby and its influence on American policy-making.⁴ Taking into consideration the whole tradition of American antisemitism, the attempt to find an answer to this question and discover probable causes of such controversies seems an interesting object to explore.

One of the aims of the given work is to trace the roots of conspiracy theories in American history in order to discover and evaluate the possible “tradition” of conspiriologial myth creation and then look to the correlation between general conspiracy theories popular amongst Americans, and antisemitic conspiracy theories in particular.

⁴ Mark Mazzetti and Helene Cooper, “Israel Stance Was Undoing of Nominee for Intelligence Post,” *The New York Times*, March 11, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/12/washington/12lobby.html?_r=3&partner=rss (accessed May 11, 2009); Democracy Now! Freeman: “Israel Subverts US Government”, Youtube Web Site, Windows Media Player video file, 1:42, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QVQrpi01QBg> (accessed May 11, 2009).

Another aim of the work is to look at the tradition of American antisemitism, discovering its specific features and the qualities that distinguish it from the European antisemitic tradition. It seems necessary to look how the Jewish community has developed, and what the role of anti-Jewish attitudes in the relations with Gentiles has been throughout the whole American history.

The analysis of the debates around the publication of the working paper about *The Israel Lobby and the U.S. Foreign Policy* allows us to probe into the usage of antisemitic claims and the nature of these debates. Since these debates are the noticeable event of contemporary scientific discourse and usually presented as a part of the so-called “new antisemitism”, it would be interesting to analyze the debates in the context of the whole framework of American antisemitism.

Thus, according to the desired goals, the first chapter is devoted to the tradition of American conspirological myth creation and thus discovers the roots and usage of conspiracy theories in the public discourse. The second chapter focuses on the history of American antisemitism, its specific features and distinction from European antisemitism by looking at the specific status of the Jews in American milieu. The third chapter is devoted to the debates surrounding the working paper *The Israel Lobby and the U.S. Foreign Policy* by John J. Mearsheimer and Steven Walt and exploring the role of antisemitic claims and stereotypes in the discussion. Moreover, this chapter aims to demonstrate to what extent these debates related to the current American foreign policy and appears to be the result of a certain crisis to determine the actual national interest.

The corpora of sources on which the certain research is based divides in three parts: works on the nature of the phenomenon of conspiracy theories; works on antisemitism; and researches on the lobbyism in the U.S. and ethnic interest groups in particular.

The topic of conspiracy theories became a part of scholarship only from the 1960s when Richard Hofstadter published his well-known book *“The Paranoid Style in American Politics: And Other Essays”* describing the important place of conspiracy theories in American public politics.⁵ Thus, Hofstadter established the basis for future research and gave rise to numerous studies in that field. All these works deal with the so-called “paranoid tradition” in American history, giving a detailed analysis of the phenomenon of the conspiracy theory in the American context but differing in the main focus of the research. For instance, Daniel Pipes, a well-known scholar who deals with the contemporary history of the Middle East, published book on conspiracy theories in 1997, entitled *“Conspiracy: How the Paranoid Style Flourishes and Where It Comes From.”*⁶ In spite of the journalistic genre of the given work, the author made fundamental research into the conspiriologial mentality, making an analysis of certain features inherent to the phenomenon of conspiracy theory, its development and role in the contemporary world. One of the most interesting conclusions from this work is that conspiracy theories are typical in both the right-wing and left-wing ideology.

Mark Fenster makes a profound analysis of the so-called “paranoid style” in terms of the concept of Richard Hofstadter.⁷ Combining a dual perception of the phenomenon of conspiracy theories (on the one hand, as a threat to political order, and on the other hand, as an entertaining, populist expression of democratic culture), the author analyzed the nature of conspiriologial discourse in the contemporary United States concluding that conspiracy theories play an important role in the American political system.

Robert A. Goldberg presented a more historical perspective in his approach to the given phenomenon by choosing various popular conspiracy theories (Rosewell, JFK Assassination,

⁵ Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics: And Other Essays* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1996).

⁶ Daniel Pipes, *Conspiracy: How the Paranoid Style Flourishes and Where It Comes From* (n/a: Simon & Schuster Adult Publishing Group, 1999).

⁷ Mark Fenster, *Conspiracy theories: Secrecy and Power in American Culture* (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

etc.) to demonstrate how different groups of American society perceive and promote conspiracy theories.⁸ Goldberg traces the roots of “paranoid mentality” in communities of the first settlers, which was later extended to the mainstream cultural trend of contemporary America.

The collection of essays edited by Harry G. West and Todd Sanders also contributes to the research of the topic in the ethnography of suspicion and discovering of various representations of conspiratorial thinking about power in various national cultures (from Nigeria and Russia to South Korea and United States of America).⁹ It demonstrates the correlation between the transparency of public institutions in contemporary society and their perception by people through the prism of hidden forces behind the facade of transparency.

In the framework of lobbyism in the U.S., the concept of the ethnic interest groups is one of the crucial issues, and thus the scholarship concerning American foreign policy and its correlation with ethnic interest groups’ activities is rather vast. The work of Tony Smith published in 2000 covers the issues of ethnic groups involvement in foreign affairs, the role of multiculturalism and its’ influence on representation of ethnic minority group interests in U.S. foreign policy.¹⁰ The latest research of Allan Cigler and Burdett A. Loomis, “*Interest Group Politics*,” covers numerous issues on the topic of lobbyist groups in domestic and foreign U.S. politics.¹¹ Noting certain peculiarities in the development of group interest politics, the authors concluded that despite the ostensible openness of the lobbying system it had not improved equal representation or the monitoring of the cash flow to politicians.

⁸ Robert Alan Goldberg, *Enemies within: The Culture of Conspiracy in Modern America* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2002).

⁹ Harry G. West and Todd Sanders, eds. *Transparency and conspiracy: ethnographies of suspicion in the new world order* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

¹⁰ Tony Smith, *Foreign attachments: the power of ethnic groups in the making of American foreign policy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000).

¹¹ Cigler, Allan J. and Burdett A. Loomis, eds. *Interest group politics*, 7th ed. (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2007).

The issue of Israel lobby groups has been a matter of interest among political scientists for at least the last twenty years. Thus, works of David H. Goldberg and Abramo F.K. Organsky were first in that line and were published in the same year, primarily focusing on similar precedents (Yom Kippur war and followed U.S. support to Israel, U.S. financial aid to Israel, AWACS sale etc.).¹² However, while David H. Goldberg, aside from the given cases, had concentrated on the history and comparative analyses of Canadian and U.S. Israeli lobbyist groups to make a comparison of their efficiency, Abramo Organsky aimed at the deconstruction of the myth of the powerful Israel/Jewish lobby in the U.S. by comparing aid and assistance programs to Israel with other countries in the Middle East region.

The historiography of antisemitism and works on the phenomenon of the “new antisemitism” are estimated to number in the hundreds. However, this work will primarily be based on researches which deal with exploration of antisemitic stereotypes and particularly antisemitic conspiracy theories.

Thus, Norman Cohn’s *Warrant for Genocide* is essential in the framework of antisemitic conspiracy theories.¹³ Investigating the history of the notorious forgery, in “The Protocols of the elders of Zion”, the author intently explores not only of each component of the anti-Jewish myth of the all-powerful Jews controlling the media, governments and presenting a Fifth column in every country, but also shows how this myth shaped negative attitudes towards Jews and what destructive consequences it eventually had. Bernard Harrison, E. Erickson Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at the University of Utah, in the course of Alan Dershowitz’s *A Case For Israel*, made another research on the topic of “new antisemitism” focusing basically on the correlation between anti-Israel accusations and left-

¹² David Howard Goldberg, *Foreign Policy and Ethnic Interest Groups: American and Canadian Jews Lobby for Israel* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood press, 1990); Abramo Fimo Kenneth Organsky, *The 36 Billion Dollar Bargain: Strategy and Politics in U.S. Assistance to Israel* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

¹³ Norman Rufus Colin Kohn, *Warrant for genocide: the myth of the Jewish world-conspiracy and the Protocols of the elders of Zion* (London: Serif, 1996).

wing ideology which is crucial for understanding the debates around the Mearsheimer-Walt's working paper.¹⁴

Although each of the mentioned topics has enough coverage, some issues still have blind-spots which this paper intends to explore. For example, the debates around the working paper of John Mearsheimer and Steven Walt became a cause for a numerous publications, however, there has been no study published that analyzes the possible reasons of that controversy and evaluates its' influence and place in American antisemitic discourse.

¹⁴ Bernard Harrison, *The Resurgence of Anti-Semitism: Jews, Israel, and Liberal Opinion*. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006).

Chapter 1.

The Tradition of Conspiracy Myth Creation in the United States

Studying the phenomenon of conspiracy theory in the context of American history could provide a scholar with several interesting perspectives. First, the United States of America, being a nation almost completely formed by immigrants, could be a good example of studying how the patterns of consciousness, inherited from an abandoned culture, found its place in the national culture. Thus, it could be seen how certain roots of the conspiracy theory phenomenon were introduced, developed and found its' place in the national culture.

Second, a certain political and cultural openness of American society had helped various cultures introduce and develop shared sets of beliefs, thus, creating a unique diversity of cultural patterns. Daniel Boorstin wrote that “the boundless physical space, the surrounding wilderness of New England colonies” deprived the need to develop a tolerance, Puritan culture became just one of numerous dominants, though a powerful one, of American national mentality actually giving a necessary cultural injection.¹⁵

The specific concatenation of circumstances determined the emergence of this tradition; however, the United States is not a unique example where conspiracy theories played an important role in the national public discourse.¹⁶ The case of the United States is interesting in a sense that a multicultural character of society and a certain set of freedoms contributed to the national dynamic in the social and economical development of the state and, at the same time, opened a possibility for circulating of conspiracy theories openly in a public narrative.

¹⁵ Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Americans: The Colonial Experience* (New York: Random House, 1958), 8.

¹⁶ Vardan Bagdasaryan, *Teoriia Zagovora v otechestvennoii istoriografii vtoroi polovini 19-20 vv.* (Moscow: Signal, 1999), 31.

Most of the scholars trace the roots of conspiriologial mentality in the Puritan communities settled on the shores of American continent back to the seventeenth century. The first settlers under the guidance of John Winthrop departed from Europe where they suffered numerous vexations to build the “City upon a Hill”: “We shall find that the God of Israel is among us, when ten of us shall be able to resist a thousand of our enemies, when he shall make us a praise and glory... for wee must Consider that we shall be as a City upon a Hill, the eyes of all people are upon us.”¹⁷

The current quotation clearly demonstrates the two main motives that could be noticed through the whole American history. On the one hand, it is a certain exceptionalism of community of the settlers. On the other hand, it is the motive of confrontation that was important for the spreading of suspicions. These two motives have made a big impact on the American nation. American historian Perry Miller wrote that these settlers were not just immigrants looking for the asylum. “It was an organized task force of Christians, executing a flank attack on the corruption of Christendom. These Puritans did not flee to America; they went in order to work out that complete reformation which was not yet accomplished in England and Europe.”¹⁸

The feeling of participation in the process marked by Providence shaped the eschatological worldview where everything was divided into two groups: friend-or-foe. Usage of that mythological setting appears to be the one of the main features of conspiriologial narrative and important tool of social consolidation. That category, indicative to mythological consciousness, rejecting any rational arguments, helped a society to focus its fears and aggression on specific group of people.

One of the scholars argued that conspiracy theory in the United States

¹⁷ John Winthrop, A Model of Christian Charity <http://history.hanover.edu/texts/winthmod.html> (accessed on May 11, 2009).

¹⁸ Perry Miller, *Errand Into the Wilderness* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1996), 11.

has frequently functioned to preserve a sense of basic ideological consensus and ultimate social harmony. In particular, it has often protected what scholars have termed "American exceptionalism," the widespread conviction that North America has been exempted by Providence (or some other force) from such chronic Old World problems as inequality, scarcity, revolution, or, indeed, of any deep, inherent, or irreconcilable sociopolitical divisions.¹⁹

Fleeing from Europe to avoid oppressions, settlers inevitably inherited fears and enemies whose actions could be perceived suspiciously. Catholics, The Spanish or the British represented enemies and for certain group or colony they were the main "menace". When colonies were united into the Federation the diversity of images composed whole set of external menaces at times activated and occupied certain areas of national consciousness.

For instance, reverend William Symonds, one of the ideologists of Virginia colony, described Catholics in such a manner: "...if once they come creeping into your houses, then looke for mischief: if treason or poison bee of any force: know them all to be very Assasines, of all men to be abhorred."²⁰

Interpreting the history in religious terms, the settlers perceived their being "in the wilderness" as a permanent struggle with Evil that was often incarnated in the visible "others" - Blacks or Indians. That struggle for God justified the violence and atrocities towards these groups of inhabitants. Some scholars even argued that the conflict between Europeans and Native Americans should be considered as a crucial in establishing of American conspiracy culture since the whole process of colonization of the continent was permeated by the spirit of paranoia.²¹

¹⁹ Jeffrey L. Pasley, "Conspiracy Theory and American Exceptionalism from the Revolution to Roswell" (paper presented at "Sometimes an Art": A Symposium in Celebration of Bernard Bailyn's Fifty Years of Teaching and Beyond, Harvard University, May 13, 2000) http://conspiracy.pasleybrothers.com/CT_and_American_Exceptionalism_web_version.htm (accessed May 11, 2009).

²⁰ Quoted in Avihu Zakai et al., *Exile and Kingdom: History and Apocalypse in the Puritan Migration to America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 109.

²¹ Caroline M. Woidat, "The Truth Is on the Reservation: American Indians and Conspiracy Culture," *The Journal of American Culture* 29, no. 4 (December 2006): 457.

In traditional Judaeo-Christian culture, wilderness was a place to be feared rather than cherished, a place where monsters and devils lived to test the faith of good, civilized people. Especially among the New England Puritans, it was commonly believed that the Indians were devil worshippers out to do their master's bidding, though not actual devils themselves.²²

The relations with Native Americans were twofold: on the one hand, Europeans were interested in them in a sense of trading and actively cooperated with them. On the other hand, the popular European imagination had created a stable pattern of a savage hostile toward Christian that in spite of any peaceful actions was perceived as naturally aggressive and dangerous. "Regardless of the natural temperament of the New World man, his contact with Europeans thus far had rarely been pacific. To imagine the Indian as a savage beast was a way of predicting the future and preparing for it and of justifying what one would do, even before one caused it to happen."²³ Thereby, a lot of sources from this period preserved demonized images of "subhuman" opposed to a Christian to emphasize its sinful nature: "God never created so corrupte people for vice and beastliness, without any mixture of goodnesse and civilitie."²⁴

One of the methods to demonize odd parts of resistant Natives was the formation of the mythology of a Great Chief – the personification of settlers' fears before the war genius who was driven by hostile foreign countries or even by Satan himself. Thus, "Red King's Rebellion" was not perceived by the British settlers as a series of odd raids of the Natives, as it really was, but as a skillfully planned war driven "by devilishly military genius."²⁵

In some cases Indians were driven by Devil, but sometimes they were perceived as an instrument of foreign manipulation (French or Spanish, in particular). That fear was

²² Peter Knight *Conspiracy Theories in American History: An Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, Denver, Oxford: ABC-Clío, 2003), s.v. "Indians, North American."

²³ Gary B. Nash, "The Image of the Indian in the Southern Colonial Mind", *The William and Mary Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (April 1972): 206

²⁴ Quoted in Alden T. Vaughan, "From White Man to Redskin: Changing Anglo-American Perceptions of the American Indian," *The American Historical Review* 87, no.4 (October 1982): 927.

²⁵ Russel Bourne, *Red King's Rebellion: Racial Politics in New England, 1675-1678* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 118.

specifically active near the border line. Hereby, the Earl of Egmont, John Percival claimed that “the French and Spaniards are trying to debauch our Indians” purposely to destroy Georgia.²⁶ Some of the Indian rebellions were called in American historiography “conspiracies” precisely to underline their conspiratorial character. A recurrent Indian rebellion, called later “The Pontiac Conspiracy”, was perceived as a revenge of the French for their loss in Seven years war. The French “hidden hand” could be found everywhere: in the behavior of the Chief Pontiac who called his victories the “return of Father”, i.e. France; from the reports of the British traders who wrote that saw French officers. Although they looked like ordinary European civilians, traders could detect them by specific “French” behavior and a manner to dress.²⁷ Examining these sources, the settlers and authorities, thereafter, shaped a corresponding world view.

The most striking example of the enormous suspiciousness was the so called “Praying Indians” – the baptized Natives who spoke in English and wore European clothes. According to Puritan religious philosophy, their baptism was one of the important achievements on the way to create a “City upon the Hill”. However, the first rumors of “praying Indians” collaborating with Indian rebels gave birth to the subconscious distrust to all the baptized Indians. The British, contrary to their preceding beliefs, very soon trusted rumors of treacherous Indians who read Holy Bible and collaborated with pagans. The fragile peace in the relations with that group of the Native population was destroyed and the “very name of ‘Praying Indians’ became a liability for a beleaguered people who were incarcerated, attacked and killed by the white New Englanders.”²⁸

²⁶ Shane A. Runyon, “Borders and Rumors: The Georgia Frontier in the Atlantic World” (PhD diss., University of Florida, 2005), 176.

²⁷ Gregory E. Dowd, “The French King Wakes up in Detroit: ‘Pontiac’s War’ in Rumor and History,” *Ethnohistory* 37, no. 3 (Summer 1990): 261.

²⁸ Kristina Bross, “The Vilification of Praying Indians during the King Philip’s War” in Nancy Lusignan Schultz, ed., *Fear itself: enemies real and imagined in American culture* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1998), 63.

Some observers already in the eighteenth century have been noticed a specific inclination of European settlers to create imagined enemies and fear them:

even in time of profound Peace ... were made [to] believe that the Spaniards had prepared Embarkation for [Invasion] at St. Augustine and Havana, or that the French were marching by land from Louisiana with more Men than ever were in that Country, to drive us into the Sea. Sometimes the Negroes were to Rise and cut their Masters Throats, and at other times the Indians were confederating to destroy us.²⁹

If Indians were perceived as enemies who were plotting from the outside of settlements, except for Praying Indians, who perfectly nourished fears of subversion, a fear of internal enemy, connected with Satan, in particular, existed permanently in the subconscious level of the settlers as well. Witchcraft processes, popular in the Middle Ages, also took place in the colonies, thus, underlining cultural and mental connection with European history. Salem witchcraft process, that some scholars even called “the first American conspiracy theory”, clearly defined that even in the closed space of a colonial city, where everyone knows each other, there is always a fear of plot and conspiracy, provided by Satan.³⁰

Tituba, a black woman that first confessed to sorcery, established a necessary ground for further hysteria in Salem. Being a “visible other” again, her confession had made “Satanic conspiracy” against Christianity in New England transparent. The priest from Boston, Cothorn Matther, described that conspiracy as the “plot of the Devil..., against the Country by Witchcraft, and a Foundation of Witchcraft then laid, which if it were not seasonably discovered would probably Blow up, and pull down all the Churches in the Country.”³¹

Once again the society was divided into two groups: plotters and defenders of the Christian religion, clearly drawing lines between friends and foes: “Here are but two parties in

²⁹ Quoted in Gregory E. Dowd, “The Panic of 1751: The Significance of Rumors on the South Carolina-Cherokee Frontier,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 53, no. 3, (July, 1996): 541.

³⁰ Geoffrey L. Pasley, “Witchcraft: The First American Conspiracy Theory” <http://www.pasleybrothers.com/conspiracy/> (accessed on May 11, 2009).

³¹ George Lincoln Burr, *Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648-1706* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), <http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/BurNarr.html> (accessed on May 11, 2009).

the world: the Lamb and his followers, and the dragon and his followers... Here are no neuters. Everyone is on one side or the other.”³²

The main cause for Salem witchcrafts is still the subject of discussions; however, some scholars with reason argued that Salem witch processes were triggered by the fears generated by King Philip’s war – Indian rebellion that took place at this time. Thus, some girls during the questionings were saying that they saw Devil embodied in Indian.³³ Social problems triggered anxiety and fears, which is characteristic to witchcraft processes in general. Nevertheless, the narrative of “devilish conspiracy” mentioned in numerous sources, clearly demonstrates that already at this time the primitive conspiracy theories played an important role giving an explanation to social and political vicissitudes.

Scholars had noticed that the conspirological perception of the reality is usually one of the overpowering dominants of culture that represents the connection of popular beliefs, values and, in particular, fears and misconceptions, which help social groups to construct and perceive their social identity and reality.³⁴ Therefore, it looks rather obviously that together with changing dangers for a community, a society changes the image of the main menace. When settlers realized that Indians do not constitute real danger for their identity, they shifted focus on the black slaves whose population in the end of the seventeenth century was already notable.

The perception of Blacks was dual as well: on one hand, they were considered as barbarians and culturally undeveloped persons. On the other, various uprisings of slaves had made their image dangerous and suspicious. Rumors of uprisings has been circulating and creating the ground for suspiciousness and myths of conspiracies of slaves. Usually, the

³² Quoted in Robert A. Goldberg, *Enemies within*, 5.

³³ Charles Wentworth Upham, *Salem witchcraft; with an account of Salem village, and a history of opinions on witchcraft and kindred subjects, volume I and II* (Boston: Wiggin and Lunt, 1860), 40-53.

³⁴ Casey L. Kile, “‘Shadows in the Forest’: Native Americans, Slaves and Conspiracy in U.S. Literature, 1675-1863” (PhD diss., University of California, Santa Cruz, 2002), 3.

emergence of colonial “conspiracy theories” had the similar mechanism: someone saw blacks near the place of fire (like in 1741, during the fires in New York) and that gave the factual ground for suspicions. The most notable “conspiracy” of slaves appeared in 1741 in New York and was triggered by the war with Spain in 1740.

Thus, the aspiration to strengthen American identity through the mobilization of colonies (it was the first war that American colonies pursued together), traditional suspiciousness to Spain as Catholic country that re-evoked old Protestant fears and permanent anticipation of the Black revolt resulted in the New York hysteria of 1741. Rumors about the Catholic priests who masked their identity to undermine colonies and fugitive slaves hired by the Spanish called an attention of authorities and ordinary people.³⁵

The investigation that took place after the fires showed that Catholics played a crucial role in this conspiracy, maybe even more important than the slaves. Thus, an inherited suspicion towards Catholics brought by Protestants from Europe preconditioned their place in the whole framework of the “New York conspiracy.” Certainly, the concerns of revolts were conditioned by reality since every ten years there was a big revolt of slaves. However, those slaves who were caught could not explain the events. Americans never believed that slaves could organize a coup and overthrow the government. Hereby, Catholics embodied real beneficiaries who had an experience and were able to manage the plot to destroy the whole colony.³⁶ Eventually, twenty slaves were executed and their “white” accomplices as well.

Basically, the conspiracy narrative played an important role in prerevolutionary America both mobilizing society and explaining its social and political hardships. Interacting with highly developed set of national fears, that were partly inherited from European experience or elaborated already in American colonies, the conspirollogical discourse

³⁵ Peter C. Hoffer, *The Great New York Conspiracy of 1741: Slavery, Crime, and Colonial Law* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 132.

³⁶ Peter C. Hoffer, *The Great New York Conspiracy of 1741*, 137.

predetermined a few historical events crucial for the American and world history as well. Some scholars even argued that the “conspiracy” of the British to “enslave” American colonies was an impulse to start American Revolution.³⁷ In previously mentioned precedents the society used conspirological explanations rather as a psychological supplement in understanding the reality or a reflection to that reality of certain groups in certain regions. Whereas during the prerevolutionary period the narrative of conspiracy had a greater influence than ever and already became one of the dominant narratives of forming nation. Well-established tradition just helped to shape the clear framework of conspiracy and utilize it successfully mobilizing the population of American colonies. Moreover, it became a part of generally accepted political discourse.

The theory of politics that appeared from the Prerevolutionary age described the political power as a “human hand” or a hand of power that does not know any limit, thus, attaching to the whole body of the discussion a sense of desperate panic before a possible authoritarian conspiracy to rob of rights from the citizens of American colonies.

Power is ‘grasping’ and ‘tenacious’ in its nature; ‘what it seizes it will retain.’ Sometimes power ‘is like an ocean, not easily admitting limits to be fixed in it.’ Sometimes it is ‘like a cancer, it eats faster and faster every hour.’ Sometimes it is motion, desire, and appetite all at once, being restless, aspiring and insatiable.’... It is everywhere in public life, and everywhere it is threatening, pushing and grasping.³⁸

Everything that British government tried to introduce in the colonies was perceived as a “conspiracy of ministers” and correlated with the expectations of authoritarian plot. In such a manner, the will to economical and political independence was packed in the narrative of conspiracy. Moreover, the possible rebellion against the Crown was presented as result of that plan, thus, the revolutionary were trying to exonerate themselves from responsibility. George

³⁷ Benjamin McArthur, “They’re out to Get Us”: Another Look at our Paranoid Tradition,” *The History Teacher* 29, no.1 (1995): 37-50.

³⁸ Quoted in Bernard Bailyn, *Ideological Origins of American Revolution*, 25th ed. (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1992), 56.

Washington wrote to Bryan Fairfax in 1774: “whilst I am as fully convinced, as I am of my own existence, that there has been a regular, systematic plan formed to enforce them [colonies, I.Y.], and that nothing but unanimity in the colonies (a stroke they did not expect) and firmness, can prevent it.”³⁹

At the same time the colonial authorities perceived the proponents of the separation from the British Empire as a group of plotters who created disturbances and internal instabilities purposely to seize power in colonies. Thus, governor Bernard of Massachusetts had concluded that a “faction” had organized a conspiracy against local administration. And at the head of this faction was “a secret, power hungry cabal that professed loyalty to England while assiduously working to destroy the bonds of authority and force a rupture between England and her colonies.”⁴⁰

The victory in the war for independence and founding of the United States of America consolidated various communities and states in the one federation. From that moment it could be said that the development of conspiriologial mentality shifted to the next level. On the one hand, the politics of American government were permanently interpreted by various groups of society as a conspiracy to gain an authoritarian power. On the other hand, the single state that united various communities opened a wide perspective for the expression of fears and suspiciousness towards aliens or other groups in conspiracy theories. Moreover, American society based on the regular influx of immigrants from all over the world apparently created a fertile ground for the interethnic conflicts and hostility expressed in the fear of alien subversion as well. Thereby, these two groups of conspiracy fears were presented in the public discourse of American society at times being a dominant depending on social and political circumstances.

³⁹ Letter from George Washington to Bryan Fairfax, August 24, 1774 from David Brion Davis', *The Fear of Conspiracy: Images of un-American Subversion from the Revolution to the Present* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), 34.

⁴⁰ Bernard Bailyn, *Ideological Origins of American Revolution*, 151.

Thus, the debates of the federalists and antifederalists about the structure of the new state clearly demonstrated that a conspirological discourse is still has its influence. Prerevolutionary fears and suspiciousness towards British ministers were gradually transferred to the suspiciousness towards the American government and major politicians. George Washington was quite often portrayed in the political cartoons as a king whereas his refusal to enter the war with Britain supporting France was a necessary evidence of his affiliation with British Empire. Alexander Hamilton claimed that Jefferson and Madison are “a faction decidedly hostile to me and my administration; and actuated by views, in my judgment, subversive of the principles of good government and dangerous to the Union, peace, and happiness of the country.”⁴¹ In response, Thomas Jefferson accused Hamilton in preserving the worst elements of the British political system and aspirations to despotism.

Jeffrey Pasley wrote that “American politicians of the 1790s engaged in party politics without ever learning to approve of the practice. They saw themselves as taking necessary if sometimes distasteful steps to save the republic, and their opponents as conspirators against it, plain and simple.”⁴²

At the same time, the United States being a young republic with a fragile and unbalanced political structure, founded not long before French revolution and other crucial political changes, which Europe underwent in turn of the nineteenth century, experienced serious concerns of foreign intervention in domestic affairs. For certain group, primarily Republicans, “hordes of wild Irishmen” were of greatest danger. Thus, William Cobbett published a pamphlet, *Detection of a conspiracy, formed by the United Irishmen: with the evident intention of aiding the tyrants of France in subverting the government of the United*

⁴¹ Letter to Colonel Edward Carrington, May 26, 1792 in Alexander Hamilton, *The Works of Alexander Hamilton*, vol.9 (Federal Edition), ed. Henry Cabot Lodge (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1904), http://oll.libertyfund.org/index.php?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=show.php&title=1386&search=%22subversive%22&chapter=93197&layout=html#a_2087090 (accessed on May 11, 2009).

⁴² Peter Knight *Conspiracy Theories in American History: An Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, Denver, Oxford: ABC-Clío, 2003), s.v. “Alien and Sedition Acts”.

States “accusing the group’s just-organizing American chapters of planning to gain critical positions in the government, so that the country might be simply handed over to the invading French.”⁴³

An apprehension of possible excessive dominance of immigrants with inherited values that could be contrary to American is especially visible in Thomas Jefferson’s *Notes on Virginia*:

we are to expect the greatest number of emigrants. They will bring with them the principles of the governments they leave, imbibed in their early youth... These principles, with their language, they will transmit to their children. In proportion to their numbers, they will share with us the legislation. They will infuse into it their spirit, warp and bias its direction, and render it a heterogeneous, incoherent, distracted mass.⁴⁴

Alien and Sedition acts that passed in Congress in 1798 were the first cry against immigrants, primarily Irish and British, since they were of great danger for the young republic. These laws absorbed two main fears typical for American conspiracy theories: first, the fear of the external menace embodied in various groups of European settlers; second, the fear of government tending to authoritarianism and manipulated by the bunch of conspirators. And though virtually these repressive instruments were never used in factional struggle, these laws appeared to be an important element of society suffering a phenomenon of “community under siege”. Inside these societies, or particular communities, conspirological narrative plays a role of defensive mechanism from “outside attacks” on the community’s existence. In various groups of community the efficiency and influence of such narrative has a different extent. Even so, creation and dispersion of conspirological narrative appears to be, as Theodore Remington argues, a “community-building rhetoric under conditions of duress,

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (New York: n/a, 1984), under “‘Population’ *The number of its inhabitants?*” <http://etext.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccer-new2?id=JefVirg.sgm&images=images/modeng&data=/texts/english/modeng/parsed&tag=public&part=8&division=div1> (accessed on May 11, 2009).

when the need to foster a sense of common identity within the community overrode any obligation to maintain harmonious relationships with those outside the community.”⁴⁵

Different periods of American history had different actors who represented the main danger for the state. Thus, immigrants from Europe who professed Catholicism were perceived as conspirators for a long time in the nineteenth century (and even twentieth, as well) evoking a frightening images that correlated with Protestant heritage or contemporary nativist values. Moreover, European fears of secret societies plotting to destroy a present political order had found many supporters in the United States thereby enriching the set of national enemies.

As David Brion Davis noted, a fear of conspiracies appeared to be a variation of the nativist ideology during the age of economic prosperity. The economic progress of Jacksonian era gave certain confidence that the nation chose a right direction and successfully realizes the project of world’s destiny. However, the complication of political process (i.e. the emergence of various political parties) and gradual process of cultural diversification was perceived at times with certain suspiciousness.

Many Americans felt a compelling need to articulate their loyalties, to prove their faith, and to demonstrate their allegiance to certain ideals and institutions. By so doing they acquired a sense of self-identity and personal direction in an otherwise rootless and shifting environment.⁴⁶

And conspiracy theories were a good way to demonstrate one’s loyalty and increase vigilance. Emphasizing the “otherness” of alien groups embodied in immigrants or imagined groups like Freemasons, nativists, thus, showed advantage of American values and beliefs.

The roots of American fears of Catholic, Mormon and Freemasons’ subversiveness consisted in their allegiance to autonomous center of power and strict hierarchy that kept in

⁴⁵ Theodore J. Remington, “Conspiracy Narratives as Political Rhetoric” (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 2002), 16-17.

⁴⁶ David Brion Davis, “Some Themes of Counter-Subversion: An Analysis of Anti-Masonic, Anti-Catholic, and Anti-Mormon Literature”, *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 47, no.2 (September 1960): 209.

these institutions. Since their loyalty to American institutions and values was challenged, they obviously represented the internal threat to the whole country invoking the worst nativist fears and nightmares.

The suspiciousness towards Catholics that applied both to immigrants and Catholic institutions focused primarily on their partial acculturation and affiliation with inherited national tradition that often contradicted to American. Thereby, the mass influx of Irish and Italians to the United States was marked with almost the same attitude that had, for instance, mass Jewish immigration to Hungary in the nineteenth century: these immigrants were described as dirty, uncultured and disloyal to the host state. Their visible “otherness” had put in question a state’s stability and guarantees of American freedoms, thus, reflecting Jefferson’s apprehensions. For instance, the great influx of Catholics to Massachusetts in the middle of the nineteenth century prompted social and economical changes and to certain extent preconditioned the phenomenal, though short-lived, success of Know Nothing party.⁴⁷

Being at times the dominant trend of public attitudes, anti-immigrant attitudes have been activating and usually efficient during the short period of time fading so far as an acculturation of newcomers progressed or finding a scapegoat in another community. In such a manner, mass influxes of Jewish newcomers in 1880s from Eastern Europe made “Jewish menace” the key explanation of drastic socioeconomic changes and, consequently, generating the whole bunch of conspiracy theories.

However, the unique diversity of ethnic communities that arrived to the United States created the same diversity of fears widespread amongst different groups. The Know Nothing party suspected Catholics in the Northern states in plotting against the country, while southerners were predisposed to fear Black rebels or their abolitionist supporters in conspiracy to destroy their traditional lifestyle pattern. White Californians were afraid of

⁴⁷ Dale Baum, “Know-Nothingism and the Republican Majority in Massachusetts: The Political Realignment of the 1850s”, *The Journal of American History* 64, no.4 (March 1978): 960.

economical threat posed by Chinese immigrants that impulse an active press campaign in 1870s against the Chinese who smoked opium and drugged white women into sexual slavery.⁴⁸ Thus, the conspirological narrative was widespread in American society, but focused on the different groups depending on the certain area.

However, the processes of industrialization and economic interdependence of states helped to diminish a separateness of communities and integrated them in a single, national hierarchy of socioeconomic and political life. Consequently, the new wave of nativism that emerged in the turn of the twentieth century had made a “purification” of the American nation the main motto of public agenda that was perceived equally throughout United States. Correlating with the persistent fear of foreign menace to destroy the American order, the cry for the “purification” of American nation gave a new impulse to the long tradition to perceive the “American project” as a will of Providence. In this case Americans asked for a simplicity and wholeness of life discovering the changes of the whole political and economic system with the sinister influence of visible “others”: immigrants, Blacks, etc.

The great evil that native white Americans associated with blacks...was essentially identical to what they discerned in immigrants. The evil in both cases was pollution: politically, through the sale of votes; socially, through the spread of crime, disease, and immorality; racially, through contamination of the very body of the nation.⁴⁹

The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, as a key phenomenon in that context, had visible support in the 1920s having 6 millions of supporters and 48 chapters all over the United States.⁵⁰ Claiming the purity of American nation and supporting “100 Percent American”, Ku Klux Klan provided simultaneously various anti-Catholics, anti-Communist and anti-Jewish

⁴⁸ Craig Reinerman and Harry G. Levine, *Crack in America: Demon Drugs and Social Justice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), <http://www.hereinstead.com/Crack-in-Context.htm> (accessed on May 11, 2009)

⁴⁹ John Higham, *Integrating America: The Problem of Assimilation at the Turn of the Century* in John Higham's *Hanging Together: Unity and Diversity in American Culture* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2001), 98.

⁵⁰ Rory McVeigh, “Power Devaluation, the Ku Klux Klan, and the Democratic National Convention of 1924,” *Sociological Forum* 16, no.1 (2001): 2.

conspiracy theories. Henry Ford and later Charles Coughlin found the core of problems that the United States underwent during the Great Depression in “money-changers” and international “plutocrats” clearly employing antisemitic charges.

However, the motive of “immigrant menace” was one of the few dominant trends in American conspiracy theories. Originating in mythological nature of human’s consciousness, this tool could be equally deprived of racial allegations and based on the more sophisticated arguments (i.e. political views of opponents). Being a part of political debates already in the eighteenth century, in prerevolutionary America, the allegations in conspiracy became an integral part of political discourse. "The belief in plots was not a symptom of disturbed minds," wrote Gordon S. Wood, "but a rational attempt to explain human phenomena in terms of human intentions and to maintain moral coherence in the affairs of men." Thus, conspiracy theory represented "an enlightened stage in Western man's long struggle to comprehend his social reality."⁵¹

One problem dealing with conspirological narrative is crucial for understanding its vitality. It is always hard to distinguish a real fact of conspiracy, which is an integral part of politics, and a perception of events in terms of conspiracy theory. From the point of view of mythology, every myth relies on the basis of fact even if it pictures a reality in fiction. Conspiracy theory has in its structure a number of real facts but they are used in an appropriate manner, otherwise the information would be simply distorted. Very often the conspirological myth appears to be a sort of psychological counterpart, which aims at adding a scarce knowledge of objective reality open to an ordinary person.

One of the possible explanations of popularity of conspiracy theories could be found in the mythological nature of that phenomenon. Myth in its nature not only explains reality, it

⁵¹ Gordon S. Wood, “Conspiracy and the Paranoid Style: Causality and Deceit in the Eighteenth Century,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 39, no. 3 (July 1982): 411, 429.

distinguishes reality between “us” and “them”, designating group borders and creating a common worldview. George Schöpflin wrote:

Myth is a set of beliefs, usually put forth as a narrative, held by a community itself. Centrally, myth is about perceptions rather than historically validated truths (in so far as these exist at all), about the ways in which communities regard certain propositions as normal and natural and others as perverse and alien... It provides the means for the members of a community to recognize that, broadly, they share a mindset, they are in much the same thought-world.⁵²

Conspiracy theories are the most comfortable answers to the question being raised by changing reality. Apparently, conspirological discourse gains popularity in the time of reforms, disasters, collapse of states and social systems. Thus, the first whole conspiracy theory that explained political events was the right-wing theory of Ogusten de Barruell that the French Revolution was caused by Voltaire, Rousseau and the other philosophers who plotted with Freemasons dissolution of the monarchy and Catholic religion.⁵³

Discovering the conspiracy in Freemasons’ subversion, corrupt politicians or abolitionists’ actions was the easiest and efficient way to give a description for events in internal politics during the troubled times. The efficiency of allegation in conspiracy consisted in its’ ability to mobilize the community:

One might desire to protect the Republic against her enemies, to preserve the glorious traditions of the Founders, and to help insure continued expansion and prosperity, but first it was necessary to discover an enemy by distinguishing subversion from simple diversity.⁵⁴

If during a rather calm period of 1820s the yearning to find a Catholic or Freemasons’ plot could be explained in a necessity to articulate loyalties and strengthen in belief into

⁵² George Schöpflin, “The Functions of Myth and a Taxonomy of Myths” in George Schöpflin and Geoffrey Hosking eds. *Myths and Nationhood*, (London: C. Hurst, 1997), 19-20.

⁵³ Amos Hofman, “Opinion, Illusion, and the Illusion of Opinion: Barruel's Theory of Conspiracy,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 27, no. 1. (Autumn, 1993): 28.

⁵⁴ David Brion Davis, “Some Themes of Counter-Subversion”, 210.

republican values, so during the age of serious changes the conspiracy theories functioned as a defensive mechanism from “outside attacks” on the community’s existence.

Thus, right after the Declaration of Independence political opponents started attack George Washington in the press that one of his supporters perceived as a campaign of “the few wicked men who, for base & selfish purposes, wish to subject our Country to foreign domination.”⁵⁵

During the antebellum period southern newspapers were full of the articles crying of the conspiracy of northerners against slavery. A secret underground railroad, promotion of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, support of the slaves’ disobedience were perceived as a clear sign of conspiracy. At the same time, abolitionists of 1850s perceived an existence of slavery as a conspiracy of South against North.⁵⁶

Structural changes of economical and political system after Civil war, that left lots of people unemployed, opened a new perspective for conspiratorial interpretation; therewith, mass influx of immigrants gave that interpretation the new meaning.

In times when the core identity of a society is imperiled-when we have trouble figuring out who ‘we’ are-the demand for enemy scapegoats is increased. The scapegoat thus serves a dual purpose by both representing the evil ‘them’ and simultaneously illuminating, solidifying, and sanctifying the good ‘us’.⁵⁷

The Populist Party’s political agenda together with an uncovered antisemitism, that reflected nativist mentality, promoted ideas of corrupted politicians who introduced gold standard to destroy American economics. Moreover, these ideas were given in the context that the United States is a first victim of international conspirators, thus, emphasizing again American exceptionalism. Basically, during the Progressive age both, the idea of corrupted

⁵⁵ Quoted in Marshall Smelser, “George Washington and the Alien and Sedition Acts”, *The American Historical Review* 59, no.2 (January 1954): 330.

⁵⁶ Robert A. Goldberg, *Enemies within*, 10-12.

⁵⁷ Chip Berlet, *Dynamics of Bigotry*, under “The Scapegoat,” <http://www.publiceye.org/tooclose/scapegoating-02.html> (accessed May 11, 2009).

authorities and immigrant menace, were united into all-inclusive conspiracy theory. Most probably, it was made under the influence of mass immigrant influxes, but its more explicit description was made in the twentieth century.

Bolshevik revolution in Russia created potentially new group who could be considered as fifth column and attract public suspiciousness. Workers who openly welcomed the Communist government in Soviet Russia in 1917 or protested with mottos of Socialist revolution in the United States were automatically perceived as disloyal, unpatriotic and subversive organizations, thus, attaching a nativist sense to the ordinary struggle for the rights.⁵⁸ Actually, anti-communism was convenient and that new menace responded to numerous national values being a useful tool for different groups as well. Thus, nativists could treat communist menace both in a racial and cultural way (as atheists and enemies of individualism) while the government used a Communist menace as an instrument to suppress and ban leftist organizations in the 1930s. However, the description of Communists presence in the United States was sometimes given in a clearly conspirological sense: “The communist is in the market places of America: in organizations, on street corners, even at your front door. He is trying to influence and control your thoughts.”⁵⁹ The first decade after Second World War was marked by the growing fear of Communist menace that Republican Party actively used in the electoral campaigns. The “loss” of China, the war in Korea and Soviet success with “atomic project” together with a series of sensational spy scandals gave a basis for desperate fears of the Communists “infiltrating” the country.⁶⁰ Thus, Senator McCarthy’s “witch hunt” became an important milestone and a first sign of the age when the fear of

⁵⁸ Patrick Renshaw, “IWW and the Red Scare 1917-1924,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 3, no.4 (October 1968): 68.

⁵⁹ John Edgar Hoover, *Masters of deceit: the story of communism in America and how to fight it* (New York: Henry Holt, 1958), 191.

⁶⁰ Gary A. Donaldson, *Abundance and Anxiety: America, 1945-1960* (Westport, Connecticut, London: Praeger Publishers, 1997), 46-52.

conspiracy would be actively used in public politics permanently raising in certain groups of society fears and hysteria.

In general, Second World War became the frontier for further development of conspiracy mentality in the United States. Social and economical changes, introduction of industrial and, later, post-industrial society as well as cultural changes predetermined a wide dispersion of conspiracy theories in the public discourse. Timothy Melley called these conspirological narratives in postwar America as “agency panic” describing it as “intense anxiety about an apparent loss of autonomy or self-control – the conviction that one’s actions are being controlled by someone else, that one has been ‘constructed’ by powerful external agents.”⁶¹ Previous conspiracy theories that gave an account of religious or ethnically based plots against the United States became a part of more abounding narrative of various conspiracies: from old-fashioned international Jewish conspiracy accepted by members of Black communities and right-wing activists (militia movement) to the suspiciousness towards the federal government and transnational corporations that, according to some theories, brainwashed people and shadowed for citizens of the United States.⁶²

The long tradition of suspiciousness towards the government found its’ expression in numerous both right-wing and left-wing conspiracy theories. Thus, right wing activists and members of the militia movement argued that federal government is fully under the control of international organizations (UN, for instance) and often called ZOG (Zionist occupational government) that apparently involves antisemitic sentiments. Sociologists made a typology of these groups that basically trace their roots in the nativist movement: Identity Christians the most radical part of right-wing movement who hold Jews for all American problems, Christians Constitutionalists who expanded the circle of conspirators from Jews to

⁶¹ Timothy Melley, *Empire of Conspiracy: The Culture of Paranoia in Postwar America* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 2000), 12.

⁶² Gary Allen, *None Dare Call It Conspiracy* (Seal Beach, California: Concord Press, 1972).

international organizations (as Trilateralists and Bildelbergers) and Issue-Oriented Patriots who hold specific concerns on certain topics of national agenda.⁶³ At the same time, left-wing conspiracy theories lay stress on the violation of civil rights and critics of government that is under control of huge corporations, CIA or foreign governments, as well (for instance, in case of Israel lobby that controls American government).⁶⁴

Moreover, certain communities share specific conspiriological notions. For example, the conspiriological narrative plays an important role in creating national self-awareness of Black communities and nowadays became its “lifeblood”.⁶⁵ Sharing the ideology of “community under siege”, Blacks consistently demonstrate the support of anti-government conspiracy theories, regardless of social and economical status of respondents.⁶⁶

Conspiracy theory became an important and widespread discourse called to describe contemporary politics and evaluate actions of powers, becoming “the watchword for a new nationalism, consistent with American traditions, that made belief the criterion of community.”⁶⁷ The popularity of conspiracy discourse in the contemporary United States was predetermined partially by reality itself.

Since conspiriological myth creation draws upon the certain elements of secret treachery in the contemporary political and economic order, that indeed exists, as a matter of fact its popularity address to real structural inequities of society. Sociological surveys conducted in the United States from the 1960s clearly demonstrated declining support of trust

⁶³ James A. Aho, *The Politics of Righteousness: Idaho Christian Patriots* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990), 12-20.

⁶⁴ John Marks, *The Search for the Manchurian Candidate: The CIA and Mind Control* (New York: Times Books, 1979).

⁶⁵ Daniel Pipes, *Conspiracy: How the Paranoid Style Flourishes and Where It Comes From* <http://www.danielpipes.org/books/conspiracychap.php> (accessed on May 11, 2009)

⁶⁶ Anita M. Waters, “Conspiracy Theories as Ethnosociologies: Explanation and Intention in African American Political Culture,” *Journal of Black Studies* 28, no. 1 (September 1997): 121; Paul W. Simmons and Simon Parsons, “Beliefs in Conspiracy theories among African Americans: A comparison of Elites and Masses,” *Social science quarterly* 86, no. 3 (2005): 596.

⁶⁷ Robert A. Goldberg, *Enemies within*, 232.

to federal government that creates discontent in pursuing politics.⁶⁸ Moreover, some political events and developments of modern American history that became public knowledge (such as Watergate scandal, Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment, COINTELPRO, etc.) have seriously shattered public trust into political system and gave a necessary confirmation to conspiracy theories affiliated with government.

Some researchers argued that the so-called “mood politics” which replaced debates with scandal from popular discourse also impoverished political life:

In the ‘mood politics’ of scandal, in which ‘change’ can only be imagined as the removal of one politician of party for another, the politics of trust and certainty shape the affective connection between the public and the political. The production and manipulation of trust are among the most crucial practices of contemporary politics, as the perceived trustworthiness of candidates ...serves as the ultimate guarantor of political choice.⁶⁹

In a present world dominated by the culture of individualism, an ordinary person shapes his own world view perceiving occurring events through the prism of mass culture and mass politics. However, some people search the answers in religion, some search it in science, whereas, for certain group of people conspiracy theory appears to be a response to impersonal forces that they cannot control or do not understand. So, the world around these people “is no longer as it should be. It becomes more and more an illusion, a semblance, while at the same time the evil that has occurred, or is occurring and is becoming more and more essential, takes place behind reality.”⁷⁰ Paranoia, the psychological disturbance, usually mentioned in this context, implicates the fear that others are plotting against the paranoid person and gives a psychological explanation to the social alienation of people who believe in conspiracy

⁶⁸ Seymour Martin Lipset and William Schneider, *The Confidence Gap: Business, Labor, and the Government in the Public Mind* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 15.

⁶⁹ Mark Fenster, *Conspiracy Theories: Secrecy and Power in American Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 71.

⁷⁰ Dieter Groh, “The Temptation of Conspiracy Theory; or, Why Do Bad Things Happen To Good People? Part I: Preliminary Draft of a Theory of Conspiracy Theories” in *Changing Conceptions of Conspiracy*, ed. Carl F. Graumann and Serge Moscovici (New York: Springer, 1987), 1.

theories.⁷¹ However, the psychological dimension does not give the whole picture of problem focusing primarily on personalities with chronicle diseases and leaving aside large group of people who shares conspirological notions at times.

Though, usually the libel of “conspiracy theory” perceived in debates as a pejorative and according to Michael Barkun appears to be a “stigmatized knowledge”, some elements of that discourse not infrequently transfer from the margins of society to its center.⁷² Number of scientists divides conspiracies into two types: operational conspiracies, which are the part of everyday operations of government institutions, and “world conspiracies” that in many variations is paranoid and far from reality. “World conspiracies” have fewer chances to be legitimized in public discourse while operational conspiracies could lend certain credence to suspiciousness toward government expressed in conspirological notions. And if secrecy inherently surrounds political and economic activities, being a part of it, the notions of conspiracy would fatally follow it. “Conspiracy theories link structural and historical forces to subjective political action by elites who prefer to confer and operate out of the glare of transparent daylight, in the opaque twilight of deep politics.”⁷³

In case of conspirological “mentality” as a special way of thinking in American history, it should also be noted that the existence of conspiracy theories in national discourse throughout American history does not mean that the United States could be singled out as a “conspiracy nation”, thus, emphasizing the role of suspiciousness and fear of plot throughout of whole American history.⁷⁴ Certainly, there was a set of beliefs inherited with Puritan

⁷¹ Robert S. Robins and Jerold M. Post, *Political Paranoia: The Psychopolitics of Hatred* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997), 39-40.

⁷² Michael Barkun, *A Culture of Conspiracy: Apocalyptic Visions in Contemporary America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 26-28.

⁷³ Daniel Hellinger, “Paranoia, Conspiracy, and Hegemony in American Politics” in Harry G. West and Todd Sanders, eds. *Transparency and conspiracy: ethnographies of suspicion in the new world order* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 227.

⁷⁴ Peter Knight, *Conspiracy Nation: The Politics of Paranoia in Postwar America* (New York: NYU Press, 2002).

mental outlook whereas further groups of immigrants just nourished a common suspiciousness distinctive to ethnic interrelations. However, the unique character of “American case” consists of opportunities that ethnic diversity and political pluralism could give to person and allow him to express his views. Certain groups of people with certain views could organize in groups to provide and promote their outlook and even use it in political campaigns. Such diversity of opinions and points of view that could not be suppressed by the government per se allowed conspirological narrative to exist in common national narrative attracting one’s attention.

Moreover, though certain openness of debates conceded the propagation of radical ideas, expressed specifically in conspiracy theories, the inimitable ethnic diversity had played another important role in the history of interethnic relations. Thus, the Jewish community of the United States had different status and, contrary to European tradition, was not the classic example of “other” giving way to suspicions towards the Catholic groups of immigrants. The traditional “otherness” of the Jews in Europe that in course of time was developed into the “international Jewish conspiracy”, in American context was overshadowed by different threats and was popular only during the relatively short period of time.

Chapter 2.

Anti-Jewish Conspiracy Theories in the Context of the history of American Antisemitism

“May the children of the stock of Abraham who dwell in this land continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other inhabitants, while every one shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig-tree, and there shall be none to make him afraid,” wrote George Washington to the Hebrew Congregation of Newport in 1790, thus, accentuating the relatively unique status of the Jews and the attitudes of authorities of the United States towards the Jewish population when compared to other European states of that time.⁷⁵ Indeed, the majority of scholars dealing with the history of antisemitism pay special attention to the ‘American case’, calling it, and not without reason, an ‘exception’ in the history of antisemitism.

The first Jewish settlers appeared in the colonies in the middle of the seventeenth century. It can be argued that until the second half of the nineteenth century the Jewish community existed in a certain well-being, although it was still subject to traditional Christian prejudices. However, turbulent modernization and changes in social and economic structure, global financial troubles placed stressed on the United States, as well as every other country. The consequences of these phenomena did not bypass the American society and, as a result, shaped the local antisemitic tradition and introduced anti-Jewish speculations, especially of a conspirological nature. Antisemitic public discourse grew up on the premises of an abounding conspirological tradition of the United States. It reached its peak in the interwar period of the 1920s and later, after Second World War, became an integral part of the communal

⁷⁵ George Washington, “A Reply to the Hebrew Congregation of Newport (c. August 17, 1790),” in *The Jew in The Modern World: A Documentary History*, 2nd ed., eds. Paul R. Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 495.

mythology of certain groups, such as the Ku Klux Klan, black communities, etc. In spite of the specific rootedness of the antisemitic discourse in these certain groups of American society, it can be argued that American Jewry in consequence of the unique cultural diversity and specific features of political system, enjoyed prosperity and felt relatively safe from antisemitic attacks unlike their European brethrens.

This chapter focuses primarily on the American antisemitism of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, primarily analyzing the place of anti-Jewish conspiracy theories. It aims to give a description of the specific features of American antisemitism, how it influenced public perception of the Jews in the United States and attempts to explore the place and the role of antisemitic conspiracy theories in the public narrative in order to create a more detailed comprehension of the social, political, and economic factors influencing their emergence in certain periods of American history. Leading scholars on the history of antisemitism has made a consensus concerning the period of American history (1860s-1940s) accepting the existence of a wide spreading antisemitism, when the so-called ideological antisemitism was a notable and rather influential phenomena of social life, for the first time in the American history.

The debates on antisemitism in the United States, its occurrence and similarity to European antisemitic tradition still remain the subject of heated discussion in the scholarly literature. Starting from the end of 1960s, Jewish-Gentile relations in the United States underwent critical reevaluation, for numerous reasons. Basically, there were two main positions amongst the American scholars. The first group argued that over the whole period of American history the Jews were perceived in the negative light and that notion was shared among both intellectual elite and marginal groups of public. According to this point of view, American Jewish-Gentile relations had the same features as it had in European tradition: the “blood libel” accusations, widespread negative stereotypes and deprivation of certain rights,

etc. Thus, comparing certain episodes of anti-Jewish outbursts, scholars challenged the status of American nation as a most hospitable toward the Jews as against European countries.

The second group, in contrast, responded that such exaggeration of singular facts in American-Jewish relations, which in fact occurred, appears to be the “Americanized” continuation of Salo W. Baron’s “lachrymose conception” when the history of Jewish Diaspora is perceived as “a protracted nightmare ... of trial and suffering”.⁷⁶ These debates are still going on and scholars are toiling to discover the specific nature of American antisemitism.

Basically, the history of American antisemitism can be divided into two main periods. The first époque starts with the arrival of first settlers and ends in the 1860s – the period when antisemitism existed in typical forms of Christian prejudices, abuses, etc. Based on the misconceptions of Christianity, American antisemitism sometimes emerged in the press and surfaced at various social levels, but did not have a stable public support. The Jew appeared more as an imagined category of social reality, a “Mythical Jew”, than a real person with whom ordinary American was acquainted.⁷⁷ The second period: from the mid-nineteenth century until World War II is benchmarked by the growing resentment against financial abilities of Jewish businessmen and mass immigration causing, eventually, ideological antisemitism of 1890s. Although it is hard to draw a clear line between the period of “ordinary” and “extra-ordinary” antisemitism (in terms of David Berger), a majority of contemporary scholars agree with that periodization.

The first Jewish settlers arrived in the American colonies in the middle of the seventeenth century and had to confront two different approaches in their perception by the

⁷⁶ Quoted in David A. Gerber, “Anti-Semitism and Jewish-Gentile Relations in American Historiography and the American Past” in David A. Gerber’s, ed., *Anti-Semitism in American History* (Urbana, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 11.

⁷⁷ Jonathan D. Sarna, The “Mythical Jew” and the “Jew Next Door,” in David A. Gerber’s, ed., *Anti-Semitism in American History*, 59.

neighbors. On the one hand, at New Amsterdam, they encountered a certain suspicion based on the Christian medieval prejudices. On the other hand, the founders of the Puritan colonies shared a specific philosemitism based on the notion that the Jews were God's Chosen People, miraculously sustained and preserved. Since Puritans perceived their own wandering into the American 'wilderness' as a fulfillment of the divine disposal, Jewish presence was "a mirror of the Christian prophecy and a constant reminder that the conversion of the Jews would mark the beginning of the millennium".⁷⁸ In spite of the recurrent anti-Jewish manifestations based basically on the notion of Jewish stubbornness to accept Christianity and, thus, to approach the End of Days, Jews were a less hated minority amongst other American settlers, especially overshadowed by the Catholic threat – a determinant "threat" in American modern history, often perceived as an agent of Satan, "the Harlot of Rome", "a bastard Christianity."⁷⁹ Moreover, as John Higham had argued, the Jews also benefited from the specific decentralized congregational life which positively correlated with the pluralist Protestant way of life. It gave Jews and Judaism the chance to be more acceptable than Roman Catholicism and Mormonism, which had a strong authoritarian structure that caused additional suspicion and fear of threat. The Jews shared with American Protestants "similar images of the Pope, the Inquisition, the Middle Ages" as well that potentially gave a certain mutual intergroup understanding.⁸⁰

Most probably, the fact that the Jews during the whole period of American history were not the most visible group (as they were apparently in European context) permanently overshadowed by more suspicious groups as Catholics, Blacks or Indians, was of

⁷⁸ Michael N. Dobkowsky, "Origins of American Anti-Semitism: The Religion Factor" in Michael N. Dobkowsky's, *The Tarnished Dream: The Basis of American Anti-Semitism* (Westport, Connecticut, London: Greenwood Press, 1979), 10.

⁷⁹ Frederic Cople Jaher, *A Scapegoat in the New Wilderness: The Origins and Rise of Anti-Semitism in America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), 93.

⁸⁰ John Higham, Anti-Semitism and American Culture in John Higham's *Send These to Me: Jews and Other Immigrants in Urban America* (New York: Atheneum, 1979), 179.

consequence to the specificity of American antisemitism. The traditional ‘otherness’ of the Jews inherent to European culture, in American milieu was replaced by other social groups: Indians, Catholics, Blacks, Irish, and French or imaginary groups such as Freemasons and Illuminati. At different times, these groups represented a “socially constructed identity” of the enemy attempting to undermine American institutions and patterns of life.⁸¹ “Jews simply played a less visible role in the early stages of American life, both in negative and positive sense, than their counterparts in Europe” argued Albert S. Lindemann, emphasizing the lack of extremes in the Jewish-Gentile relations.⁸²

Irish, and later, Italians more often than Jews were accused of being dirty, uncultured and, moreover, plotting against the national interest at the instigation of the Pope.⁸³ Frequently, scholars of antisemitism argue that negative attitudes towards the Jews which usually evoked strong repugnance in the European context, were shifted towards Blacks in America – the more visible “other”. While Jewish discrimination and abuse took place in this multicultural society, in general, the Blacks were perceived for a long period as ‘America’s Jews’ and suffered primarily from racism, suspicion and physical violence.⁸⁴ More to say, so-called XYZ laws were focused on foreign radicals, primarily British, the Know-Nothing movement of the 1850s concentrated on Catholics accentuating the recent trend of Catholic “subversive actions” against American republic and ignored Jews. The Anti-Chinese movement in California channeled an aggression of Irish inhabitants.⁸⁵ Thereby, the unique diversity of American culture and variety of ethnic conflicts until certain time was not able to

⁸¹ David Norman Smith, “The Social Construction of Enemies: Jews and the Representation of Evil,” *Sociological Theory* 14, no. 3 (November 1996): 205.

⁸² Albert S. Lindemann, *The Jew Accused: three anti-Semitic affairs (Dreyfus, Beilis, Frank), 1894-1915* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 201.

⁸³ Leon Poliakov, *Suicidal Europe, 1870-1933*, vol. 4 of *The History of Anti-Semitism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 220.

⁸⁴ Eric J. Sundquist, *Strangers in the Land: Blacks, Jews, Post-Holocaust* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 20-21.

⁸⁵ John Higham, American Anti-Semitism Historically Reconsidered in Charles H. Stember’s *Jews in the Mind of America* (New York, London: Basic Books, Inc., 1966), 241.

create a unitary and active antidemocratic mentality against Jews similar to certain European countries.

While European intellectuals, such as Voltaire, were giving a new appreciation of the Jewish question and transferring anti-Jewish speculations into the language of the Enlightenment, in American society the Jews and “Jewish conspiracy” occupied only small segment (mostly of religious character) in the repertoire of national menaces.

The multiethnic character of American society gave the Jewish community the chance to have the same rights as other national communities in this “asylum for oppressed and dishonored”.⁸⁶ Already in the eighteenth century, Jews were successfully assimilated into Anglo-Saxon community having the same opportunities as an ordinary American had (same schools for children, inheriting property from Christians, etc). Indeed, Jews had certain political and economic disabilities in some colonies, as well as limitations in their rights for settlement, naturalization, officeholding, but they shared these adversities with other religious minorities which did not professed Christianity or professed different type of Christianity.⁸⁷ Moreover, legal limitation of political rights, by the beginning of the nineteenth century was a consequence of the absence of Jewish community in certain regions or its insufficient activity.⁸⁸ David A. Gerber points to the interesting fact that “nowhere in the British colonies were Jews forced into exile, or made to suffer the loss of economic freedom, or deprived of the freedom to practice their religion.”⁸⁹

In fact, some authors of all-inclusive conspiracy theories at the turn of the nineteenth century alluded that the Jews were to be found at the core of subversive organizations, such as the Illuminati, and were directing its destructive actions against the United States. Such

⁸⁶ Frederic Cople Jaher, *A Scapegoat in the New Wilderness*, 126-127.

⁸⁷ Jacob Rader Marcus, *Early American Jewry: The Jews New York, New England and Canada, 1649-1794*. Vol.1 (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1951): 26-33, 128.

⁸⁸ Ibid., Vol. 2., 384-388.

⁸⁹ David A. Gerber, *Anti-Semitism and Jewish-Gentile Relations in American Historiography and the American Past*, 14.

accusations, first appeared in American public discourse in 1806 and later, some of these ideas were integrated in political movements' agenda (for instance, Anti-Masonic Party, Know-Nothing Party). However, as one author concluded, "such claims were not generally accepted at the time, and the French Revolution's contemporary U.S. critics tended to regard its conspiratorial aspects as largely unconnected with Judaism or Jewishness."⁹⁰

In the Colonial period and until the mid-nineteenth century, prejudices and anti-Jewish accusations were predominantly of Christian background. As Michael Dobkowsky noted, Americans

brought with them as emotional and cultural baggage many of the prejudices and misconceptions that were prevalent in Europe and added a few of their own. A nation built of many nations did not rid itself so easily of the intolerance and suspicion that were the legacies of Europe.⁹¹

Though Oscar Handlin in an essay *American Views of the Jew at the Opening of the Twentieth Century* argued about relatively tolerant attitudes towards Jews in American society in the nineteenth century, some of contemporary researches caused a certain debates about his main argument, giving examples of individual anti-Jewish outbursts that took place in the nineteenth century America. For instance, the perception of Jews as Christ-killers found the expression in the *New York Herald* editorial published in 1837. James Gordon Bennett, the founder of the newspaper, accused the journalist and inspector of the port of New York Mordecai Manual Noah, a prominent figure in American establishment who publicly displayed his Judaism and defended Jews against various attacks, in "belonging to a secret conspiracy of Jews and infidels whose goal was to uproot Christianity in the United States."⁹² Accusing Noah, Bennett used traditional arguments, based on Christian prejudices, completed

⁹⁰ *Conspiracy Theories in American History: An Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, Denver, Oxford: ABC-CLIO, 2003), s.v. "Antisemitism."

⁹¹ Michael N. Dobkowsky, *Origins of American Anti-Semitism: The Religion Factor*, 11.

⁹² Robert Rockaway and Arnon Gutfeld, "Demonic Images of the Jew in the Nineteenth Century United States," *American Jewish History* 89, no. 4 (December 2001): 363.

with popular accusations of the period of emancipation. According to Bennett, that conspiracy was “stimulated by the same people who, in Jerusalem, cried out ‘Crucify him’”, without “a country – without a home – without a nation, this singular people still continue to make war in disguise on that great system of revelation... which subverted the people and name of the Jews.”⁹³ However, Noah almost immediately responded these accusations, printing a series of satires about life of Bennet’s family, hauled him into court on charges of libel twice, and in one case sued him for nonpayment of debt. Noah also tried to organize two “moral boycotts” of the Herald (1837 and 1840).⁹⁴ Although Jonathan D. Sarna noted that these attempts to struggle with groundless attacks from Bennett in the long-run perspective were inefficient, the fact of organized response, its forms and wide public promotion, though not always efficient, clearly singles out “American exception” from European antisemitic tradition of the nineteenth century.

James Bennett’s accusations of Mordecai Noah demonstrate that antisemitic conspiriologial narrative in the first half of the nineteenth century had explicit Christian influence and bore modern European trends of anti-Jewish rhetoric. However, Christian stereotypes “faded into the background with the increasing secularization of society and the multiplication of personal contacts with real live Jews.”⁹⁵

In the first half of the nineteenth century antisemitic speculations could not obtain wide public support without proper social and economic conditions. Besides, Americans still shared mixed feelings towards Jewish population: both positive and negative. “On the favorable side, the Jew commonly symbolized an admirable keenness and resourcefulness in trade. In this sense, his economic energy seemed very American. In another mood, however,

⁹³ Quoted in Frederic Cople Jaher, *A Scapegoat in the New Wilderness*, 154.

⁹⁴ Jonathan D. Sarna, *Jacsonian Jew: The Two Worlds of Mordecai Noah* (New York, London: Holmes&Meier Publishers, Inc., 1981), 119-121.

⁹⁵ John Higham, “Social Discrimination Against Jews in America, 1830-1930,” *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 47, no. 1 (September 1957): 4.

keenness might mean cunning; enterprise might shade into avarice.”⁹⁶ Later on (starting from 1860s) together with the extension of mass politics popular anti-Jewish narrative started channelling through magazines, newspapers and novels gaining wider support.

In general, American society based on permanent influx of immigrants, recognized their economic value and developed instruments of their assimilation. Moreover, the process of redefining what it means to be an American consequently shaped American identity as pluralistic and open to all people.⁹⁷ “There was no pressing sense of the foreigner as a distinctively national menace,” argues John Higham emphasizing multiethnic character of American society.⁹⁸ Fears of ‘Judaization’, in a sense that was popular in European countries during the process of the Jewish emancipation, were basically absent until the end of the nineteenth century in the United States.

The complication in understanding of American antisemitism and its conspirological aspect as well, consists in the detection of its visibility and consequence. Since the United States was multiethnic democratic republic, “any expression of a specific ethnic hostility, such as anti-Semitism, was to be understood as a manifestation of a generally anti-democratic temper.”⁹⁹ Thus, lacking constitutional or governmental sanction, its partisans expressed their ideas without wide public support and were taken seriously rarely. As compared with European counterpart, American antisemitism “tended to lack a confident voice and has been most associated with demagogues and fringe elements willing to speak out publicly against the liberal consensus.”¹⁰⁰ Certainly, antisemitic attitudes kept persistently on various levels of

⁹⁶ Ibid., 5.

⁹⁷ Albert S. Lindemann, *Esau's Tears: Modern Anti-semitism and The Rise of The Jews*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 254.

⁹⁸ John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925*. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1955), 27.

⁹⁹ John Higham, “American Anti-Semitism Historically Reconsidered”, 239.

¹⁰⁰ David A. Berger, *Anti-Semitism and Jewish-Gentile Relations in American Historiography and the American Past*, 19

American society but they had minor effect on public perception of the Jews and were unable to receive wide support or shape political platform.

John Higham very clearly defined conditions for the activation of anti-Jewish sentiments in the United States. An alarmist call expressed in ideological antisemitism mostly in response to mass immigration “happened only in moments of crisis, when war or depression sharpened resentment at the speculator and the profiteer.”¹⁰¹ Emerging for the first time during the Civil War, it will develop and mark a few periods of American history until Second World War, from time to time becoming a noticeable element of public discourse.

According to Leon Poliakov, the Jewish community in the United States in the 1840 numbered 15,000 but grew enormously to reach 300,000 in 1880.¹⁰² The growth of the Jewish population was reflected in popular imagination by invoking images of Shylock, greedy and treacherous by instinct, and later was amplified by populist rhetoric of Jewish immorality that contradicted the so-called ‘American work ethic’.

Scholars noticed that Americans “have always put an exceptionally high premium on productivity: on the hand and the machine in mastering the wilderness, creating abundance and achieving industrial efficiency.”¹⁰³ In that sense, Jewish visible presence and activities in business, trading and petty financial operations were perceived through the influence of nativism and its misconceptions. Certainly, American nativists had the same misconceptions towards all ethnic groups presented in the United States in the first half of twentieth century. However, Jewish stereotypes were of particular difference because of “a specific historical image deeply rooted in European and American consciousness” shaping an image of Shylock, “as economic parasite and predator...., heartless, greedy, a cynical materialist, ever calculating

¹⁰¹ John Higham, *Anti-Semitism and American Culture*, 182.

¹⁰² Leon Poliakov, *Suicidal Europe, 1870-1933*, 223.

¹⁰³ John Higham, *American Anti-Semitism Historically Reconsidered*, 247.

the main chance.”¹⁰⁴ This image was of important significance since it helped to determine constantly developing multicultural diversity and specific attitude towards a certain ethnic group. The “mental construct” of “Jewish business... provided a baseline for judging the businesses of individual Jews, thus helping to solve the cultural puzzle that Jewish enterprises did indeed constitute” and giving “an additional standard for reinforcing efforts to redefine ‘good’ and ‘bad’ business.”¹⁰⁵

The injection of Christian anti-Jewish sentiments that existed on the psychological level was important as well, shaping a framework for “the most persistent theme in anti-Semitism from medieval times to the present” on the American ground.¹⁰⁶ Fitting in customary system of stereotypes, inherited from European experience, American elites at times raised this image in public consciousness.

The first appreciable manifestations on the state level of the image of Shylock appeared during the Civil war when notorious Order no. 11 of General Ulysses S. Grant declared the expulsion of the Jews who violated any regulation of trade from the warzone within twenty-four hours. And though the immediate reaction of the Jewish community by the letters to Abraham Lincoln took effect and Grant rescinded the order, his response to Lincoln is of particular interest: “Mr. President, as you have directed me, I will rescind the order; but I wish you to understand that these people are the descendants of those who crucified the savior and from the specimens I have here, the race has not improved.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ David A. Gerber, “Cutting Out Shylock: Elite Anti-Semitism and the Quest for Moral Order in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century American Market Place.” *Journal of American History* 69, no. 3 (December 1982): 629.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 631.

¹⁰⁶ Michael N. Dobkowski, “American Anti-Semitism: A Reinterpretation,” *American Quarterly*, 29, no.2 (Summer 1977): 171-172.

¹⁰⁷ Quoted in Joakim Isaacs, “Ulysses S. Grant and the Jews,” in *The American Jewish Experience*, ed. Jonathan Sarna (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1986), 64.

Although later Grant was apologetic about that order and even supported the American Jewish community, the controversy demonstrates that the stereotype of the greedy treacherous Jew was kept in the subconscious level of American establishment by this time.

Followed manifestations of social antisemitism presented attempts of older social elite to preserve own status and consequently fell back to the speculations of the extreme “offensiveness” of Jews possessed “as a sect or nationality.”¹⁰⁸ While the Jews were solid, highly assimilated group, and occupied relatively comfortable status in society with no perspective of rapid group advancement, there was practically no problem with antisemitism. However, a remarkable proportion of Jewish immigrants and their abrupt financial development gave birth to certain hostilities.

“We are in the hands of the Jews. They can do what they please with our values,” claimed Henry Adams blaming the Jews in “the total, irremediable, radical rottenness of our whole social, industrial, financial, and political system.”¹⁰⁹ This quotation clearly reveals that some members of old American establishment perceived growing social and economic influence of Jews as a menace and projected intensified economical competition into the sphere of ethnic prejudices.

Indeed, the image of Jewish nouveau riche had a certain negative impact, but trade and other urban professions were driven by the objective of creating easier acculturation and assimilation of Jewish immigrants in easier acculturation and assimilation. Nevertheless, in spite of some negative attitudes, the general perception of the Jew was still ambiguous:

Sometimes he was cast as the embodiment of progressive business techniques, an exemplar of all that was good about the nation’s industrial capitalist ethos. On the other hand, he was also seen as the representative of many of modernity’s ills – a physical weakening, a carrier of disease, someone who placed personal gain above the “finer virtues” of polite society. In many respects, the racial discourse about the Jew,

¹⁰⁸ The Manhattan Beach Affair in Paul R. Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, *The Jew in The Modern World: A Documentary History*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 466.

¹⁰⁹ Henry Adams, *The Jews Make Me Creep (1896, 1901, 1914)* in Paul R. Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, *The Jew in The Modern World: A Documentary History*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 467.

with its mix of identification and repulsion, reflected Americans' own uncertainties about their changing world.¹¹⁰

The most powerful and critical allegation reflected in numerous conspiracy theories was the lack of patriotism and rootlessness of Jewish community that correlated with nativist mentality and played a crucial role in the rhetoric of nativists and supporters of Populist Party for a long time: "You have no native, no political, no religious sympathy with this country. You are here solely to make money, and your only wish is to make money as fast as possible."¹¹¹ The quoted fragment from a newspaper article resonate the allegation of Johann David Michaelis that "the Jews will always see the state as a temporary home" and had an influence on American anti-Jewish discourse.¹¹²

The new wave of immigration from European countries became a turning point for American antisemitism designating the reversal from generally positive attitudes to widespread hostility in purpose of preservation of Anglo-Saxon and Protestant population. Although, the "hordes of the wretched submerged population of the Polish Ghettoes" made a profound impact on American nativism, and gave birth to racial antisemitism, nevertheless, the hostility toward Jews was combined with similar hostility towards various ethnic groups.¹¹³ It was widespread and generally projected towards everyone who differed from the image of the conservative, Protestant, Northern European pattern.

Certainly, the Jewish appearance became more tangible and the evident "otherness" embodied in Eastern Jews made the whole Jewish community a visible actor of everyday life affording an opportunity to project hostility and blame Jews in vicissitudes. To some extent

¹¹⁰ Eric L. Goldstein, "The Unstable Other: Locating the Jew in Progressive-era American Racial Discourse," *American Jewish History* 89, no.4 (December 2001): 390.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Johann David Michaelis, "Arguments Against Dohm" in *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*, Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 43.

¹¹³ Salo W. Baron, *Steeled by Adversity: Essays and Addresses on American Jewish Life* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1971), 283-284.

the American case is similar to Hungarian where massive influxes of Jews from Russian Empire aroused strong anti-Jewish attitudes. However, different social and political preconditions in those countries predetermined different results in attempts to solve “Jewish question.”

The crisis tendencies of 1880s affected almost all groups of American society: rural and agricultural areas suffered from monopolies, declining farm prices and rising debts; corporations cut wages and fired employees. On the other hand, the expansion of the cities and fast modernization had been destroying familiar way of life. Conservative thinkers who imagined American society as a homogeneous culture saw the downfall of this idea everywhere and located the “heart of the problem” in expanding cities and immigrants providing sources for this expansion. “The social critics of the eighties might not indulge in the characteristically nativist assault on the newcomer as a foreign enemy of the American way of life... But they raised the question of assimilation in a broadly significant way by connecting it with the central issues of the day.”¹¹⁴ It gave intellectual basis for the anti-immigrant feelings whereas further business failures, the industrial depression of 1883-1886 and general economic depression of 1893-1897 transformed intellectual claims into mainstream trends of public discourse.

The first group, often mentioned in this context, was agrarians whose economical positions appreciably became worse. Drop of prices of their produce on world markets and increase of transportation prices had left majority of them in debt raising misunderstanding and panic among agrarians. Moreover, “the interplay of products and prices on the world market involved an intermixture of complexities far too difficult for them... to grasp.”¹¹⁵ Consequently, the search for scapegoat had led some of agrarians to the Jews as a source of their troubles. The stake to antisemitism was not a major motive of political program of

¹¹⁴ John Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 39.

¹¹⁵ Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 49.

Populist Party, arguing mostly for silver standard instead of gold that was gradually introduced by government. However, allusions with “Rothschild”, “Shylock” and various religious metaphors regularly emerged in populist rhetoric.

John Higham also had noticed that a big impulse to American anti-Semitism, especially in the Gilded Age, was given by other immigrants from Europe who brought and transplanted European antisemitism on the American ground, apart from existing Christian antisemitism of Protestants. “Jostling against one another in intimate competition for living space, livelihood, and status, the immigrants found their adversaries close at hand, and the influence of an Old World heritage gave much of this friction an anti-Semitic character.”¹¹⁶

Certain economical visibility of the Jews together with increased mass influx of Jewish immigrants entirely fitted all doctrines and stereotypes associating incapability to assimilate and disloyalty with enormous economical influence based on international banking capital and consequently created an image of international Jewish conspiracy against the United States.

The Jew was represented in many circles in the United States as a world-wide family clan with identical interests everywhere; a secret force behind the throne which degrades all governments into mere façade, or into marionettes whose strings are manipulated by Hofjuden from behind the scenes. Because of their aloofness from society and concentration upon the closed circle of the community, they were suspected by some of working for the destruction of all social structures.¹¹⁷

The most developed concept which embodied all conspirological suspicions was Rothschild banking family that nourished fears of certain Americans until even present times. Already during the 1830s, one of the newspapers characterized Rothschild family as governors of the whole Christian world. “Not a cabinet moves without their advice. They stretch their hand, with equal ease, from Petersburg to Vienna, from Vienna to Paris, from

¹¹⁶ John Higham, “Antisemitism in the Gilded Age: A Reinterpretation,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 43 (March 1957): 575.

¹¹⁷ Michael N. Dobkowski, “Ideological Anti-Semitism in America: 1877-1927,” PhD diss., New York University, 1976, 386.

Paris to London, from London to Washington...”¹¹⁸ It is difficult to suggest to what extent such notions were popular in that period of time, however, later on, that sort of allegations apparently gained more wider support. Populists, as Michael Dobkowski had noted, “did not create the portrait...nor did they give it its ultimate expression, but they contributed to its continuation and made it relevant for many who were hopelessly searching for an explanation for seemingly insurmountable difficulties.”¹¹⁹

The determination of the federal government to maintain gold standard was tackled by middle class and farmers and became one of the issues in the electoral campaign in 1890s. “Tradition connected Jews with gold, which was becoming one of the major touchstones of internal strife... Since greedy, destructive forces seemed somehow at work in the government, suspicion dawned that a Jewish bid for supremacy was wreaking the havoc America could not control.”¹²⁰ For instance, historian John Ridpath pictured Rothschild in the image of Shylock,

“sitting ‘at the money table of the nations.’ One hand is above the table, the other below. In the hand above the table ‘he holds the strings of international journalism and oratory.’ In the hand under the table ‘he holds the strings of diplomacy and politics stretching from his office to the ends of the earth’.”¹²¹

Arguing that Rothschild banking family and other Jewish bankers act in coalition with corrupted politics, both right-wing and left-wing intellectuals began develop racist arguments “claiming that some inherent, genetically acquired racial imperative drove Jews toward a quest for world domination and generally to reprehensible financial and commercial activities.”¹²² For instance, information about the participation of Rothschild banking house in president’s Cleveland bargain to purchase gold in Europe to support gold standard in American economics consequently strengthened Populist’s fears, thus, giving important

¹¹⁸ Quoted in Michael N. Dobkowski, *Ideological Anti-Semitism in America: 1877-1927*, 388.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 395.

¹²⁰ John Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 93.

¹²¹ Quoted in Robert Rockaway and Arnon Gutfeld, “Demonic Images of the Jew in the Nineteenth Century United States,” *American Jewish History* 89, no.4 (December 2001): 371.

¹²² Peter Knight *Conspiracy Theories in American History: An Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, Denver, Oxford: ABC-Clío, 2003), s.v. “antisemitism.”

factual basis for conspiratorial allegations.¹²³ Again, like a hundred years ago, the demonic image of England emerged in popular consciousness in connection with Rothschild family, stirring up old fears and projecting them to imagined enormous Jewish influence. “The Jew entered the picture ...as a financial agent of British world power. The agrarians attacked English influence far more frequently than Jewish influence; and when they turned upon Shylock also, they associated him closely with John Bull.”¹²⁴

Ignatius Donnelly, U.S. congressman and writer, gave striking apocalyptic description of mysterious Jewish brotherhood controlling the United States and attempting to conquer whole world in 1988 in the novel *Caesar's column*. Mysterious “brotherhood” consisted of proletarians and coupled with Demons (which apparently referred to the medieval representation of the Jew with Devil) had planned to seize the whole world. According to the plot, conspirators wanted arrange a simultaneous outbreak of proletarians on both sides of the Atlantic:

So that one continent should not come to the help of the other. If, however, this could not be effected, he was to return home, and the Brotherhood would precipitate the revolution all over America at the same hour, and take the chances of holding their own against the banker-government of Europe.¹²⁵

The author not only fell back on the classic antisemitic stereotypes, depicting vice-president of the Brotherhood, but clearly showed “the face” of real menace for the nation:

The face was mean and sinister; two fangs alone remained in his mouth; his nose was hooked; the eyes were small, sharp, penetrating and restless; but the expanse of brow above them was grand and noble... His person was unclean, however, and the hands and the long finger-nails were black with dirt. I should have picked him out anywhere as a very able and a very dangerous man. He was evidently the vice-president of whom the spy had spoken--the nameless Russian Jew who was accounted ‘the brains of the Brotherhood.’¹²⁶

¹²³ John Higham, “Antisemitism in the Gilded Age: A Reinterpretation,” 568.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 574.

¹²⁵ Ignatius L. Donnelly, *Caesar's Column: A Story of the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: F.J. Shulte & Co., 1890), <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/5155> (accessed May 11, 2009).

¹²⁶ Ignatius L. Donnelly, *Caesar's Column*.

One of the last episodes of the novel contains the monologue of the main character which could be easily put in the one line with the *Protocols of Elders of Zion* and Henry Ford's *The International Jew*:

They corrupted the courts, the juries, the newspapers, the legislatures, the congresses, the ballot-boxes and the hearts and souls of the people. They formed gigantic combinations to plunder the poor; to make the miserable more miserable; to take from those who had least and give it to those who had most. They used the machinery of free government to effect oppression; they made liberty a mockery, and its traditions a jest; they drove justice from the land and installed cruelty, ignorance, despair and vice in its place.¹²⁷

It should be noted as well that “Jewish conspirators” in Donnelly’s novel embodied in two completely contrary images: on the one hand, they are proletarians and on the other – capitalists controlling financially United States. Thus, the author clearly demonstrated one of the distinctive features of conspiracy theory.¹²⁸

Another novel, *A Tale of Two Nations* by William Hope Harvey, gives a similar account of the financial conspiracy provided by British Jew, Baron Rothe to demonetize silver in America for his own profit and for the destruction of the United States as well.

I will crush their manhood. I will destroy the last vestige of national prosperity among them... I will set them fighting among each other, and see them cut each other's throats, and carry devastation into each other's homes, while I look on without loss. I am in command of the greatest campaign the world has ever experienced.¹²⁹

Eventually, through support of corrupted politicians and after ten years of activities, American economy, according to Harvey, is in hands of British the Baron Rothe. Moreover, the United States is just a part global plan, “a financial movement that was to encircle the globe.”¹³⁰ Thus, author shares not only nativist fears of joint British-Jewish financial invasion

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Daniel Pipes, *Conspiracy: How the Paranoid Style Flourishes and Where It Comes From* (n/a: Simon & Schuster Adult Publishing Group, 1999), <http://www.danielpipes.org/books/conspiracychap.php> (accessed May 11, 2008).

¹²⁹ Quoted in Michael N. Dobkowski, *Ideological Anti-Semitism in America: 1877-1927*, 405.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

but places United States as a vanguard of conspiratorial attacks emphasizing a particular place and role of the United States in the world.

Basically, antisemitic conspiracy theories of ideological antisemitic organizations imbibed two mentioned anti-Jewish features: the first, an image of the Jew as a financier and banker (embodied in “Shylock”), who can control economy or even destroy the Republic by the use of financial resources. Appeared in the 1820s as a marginal image used at times in particular cases of Jewish-Gentile relations, by the end of the nineteenth century it became main image used by ideological antisemites. The second was the fear of external menace to the country personified in already assimilated Jews but disloyal by their nature or inassimilable masses of Jewish immigrants. This precise motive of external threat was peculiar for the whole American conspirological tradition and from time to time embodied in various images (Catholics, French, British, Masonry) reflecting its nativist entity.

Thus, powerful in the crisis period of 1880-1890s, American antisemitism had lost part of its energy in the first decade of twentieth century, during the age of relative confidence, and became again topical in the post World War I period reflecting, to certain extent, the attitudinal character of American antisemitism.¹³¹

The entry of the United States into World War I doubled fears of conspiracy and subversion and considered almost all categories of hyphenated Americans as potential plotters. The combination of increased anti-foreign outcry which influenced the anti-immigrant legislation, economic outcomes of war, fast growth of new immigrants from Poland and Bolshevik revolution in Russia triggered “Red Scare” which again challenged loyalty of Jews as citizens of the United States.¹³² The Jews were prominent among Communists both in Russia and the United States; therefore, suspicions claimed that the

¹³¹ Henry L. Feingold, “Finding a Conceptual Framework for the Study of American Antisemitism,” *Jewish Social Studies* 47, no. 3/4 (Summer - Autumn, 1985): 320.

¹³² Arthur Hertzberg, *The Jews in America*, 227-228.

Bolshevik revolution was met by Jews with sympathy. Bolshevik calls for international revolution and intensified riots of industrial workers in the United States, inspired by Russian revolution, provoked a strong wave of patriotism. However, it is interesting to notice that according to some researchers from social psychology, patriotism is the most important factor associated with prejudice.¹³³ Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer declared he found a nucleus of the conspiracy in a “small clique of outcasts from the East Side of New York” who were “under the criminal spell of Trotzky and Lenin”. Further speculations on World Jewish conspiracy embodied in Judeo-Communist bond became determinant in the next few decades.¹³⁴

Even more noticeable example of demonical tie of external forces appeared in words of John Jay Chapman in the 1920. Mixing old Protestant fears with contemporary established scapegoats, he argued:

The Catholic Church and the Jews are working hand in hand ... They are both anti-national and international in their plans and politics ... I have nothing against the catholic Church whatever... Nor I have anything whatever against the Jews as Jews; but, as an American, I am peculiarly sensitive and watchful... of all movements of an international nature... and particularly... when two great international forces – the Roman Church and the Jewish Sanhedrin – are working together.¹³⁵

Antisemitism in 1920s for the particular groups of American society became broader movement with racist element. Still, anti-Jewish hostility again was one of numerous tendencies, such as anti-Catholicism, anti-Negro or anti-Japanese feelings, emerged on the ground of ethnic or cultural difference from the mentioned Protestant and Northern European pattern. Even the Ku Klux Klan, instead of concentrating on a single minority, “proposed to

¹³³ Stanley Coben, “A Study in Nativism: The American Red Scare of 1919-20,” *Political Science Quarterly* 79, no. 1 (March, 1964): 53.

¹³⁴ Quoted in Robert A. Goldberg, *Enemies within*, 14.

¹³⁵ Quoted in Michael N. Dobkowski, *The Tarnished Dream: the basis of American anti-Semitism*, 197.

‘restore’ the supremacy of the ‘old stock’ and, thus, purify America of moral and racial pollution” without a particular focusing on Jews.¹³⁶

One of the most prominent examples was a series of publications in the *Dearborn Independent* and later on collected in *The International Jew* written by Henry Ford. The influence of *The International Jew* cannot be overlooked: it suffices to say that Henry Ford’s publication anticipated and, to a large extent, inspired the Nazi’s concept of the “international Jewish conspiracy.” Moreover, it appeared to be a culmination and implementation of gathered American experience.

Basically, making a paraphrase of the Protocols, first published in the United States in 1919, Henry Ford had tried to make the publication closer to current events in a sense that it could give an answer to occurred changes. First, the title *The International Jew* by itself emphasizes a cosmopolitan and therefore unpatriotic nature of the Jews, referring to posed external threat. Wanderers around the world, the Jews, are portrayed as rootless by nature and manipulative, the ones who tend to use their host country only for personal, and financial in particular, gains. For these purposes Ford gave an example of German Jewry:

The Jew hated the German people; therefore, the countries of the world which were most dominated by the Jews showed the greatest hatred of Germany during the recent regrettable war... The sole winners of the war were Jews... the so-called German Jew forgot loyalty to the country in which he lived and joined the outside Jews in accomplishing the collapse of Germany.¹³⁷

Thus, the author not only stresses the potential Jewish disloyalty and danger for the state, presenting Jews as a fifth column, but also explains the World War I as a Jewish machination. According to Ford, speculations during the war allowed Jews to make good money: “Jews appeared in banks, war companies, distribution societies, and the ministries of supplies—wherever the life of the people could be speculated in or taxed. Articles that were

¹³⁶ John Higham, “American Anti-Semitism Historically Reconsidered”, 240.

¹³⁷ Henry Ford, *The International Jew: The World’s Foremost Problem*, (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing Co., 2003), 26.

plentiful disappeared, only to reappear again at high prices.”¹³⁸ That quotation distinctively refers to the image of greedy businessman emerged for the first time during the Civil War.

An integral part of every Jewish conspiracy theory is a stereotype of Jewish “state within a state” position which is present in Ford’s concept as well: “Judaism is the most closely organized power on earth, even more than the British Empire. It forms a State whose citizens are unconditionally loyal wherever they may be and whether rich or poor.”¹³⁹

Ford maintains that one of the reasons to perceive the Jew as an alien element for American nation results from his inability to assimilate and accept American values: “The American Jew does not assimilate... The Jew could merge with the people of America if he desired, but he doesn’t” because of his “aloofness.”¹⁴⁰

An important point of Ford’s work is an allegation that Jews hush up truth about their activities in press and suppress every accusation, labeling accuser an “antisemite” which appears to be a peculiar feature of American milieu because only in the United States such label could harm the reputation of the claimer as contrasted with European experience:

Anyone who essays to discuss the Jewish Question in the United States or anywhere else must be fully prepared to be regarded as an Anti-Semite, in high-brow language, or in low-brow language, a Jew-baiter... until one looks at the letterheads of the magnates who write, and at the financial ratings of those who protest, and at the membership of the organizations whose responsible heads hysterically demand retraction. And always in the background there is the threat of boycott, a threat which has practically sealed up the columns of every publication in America against even the mildest discussion of the Jewish Question.¹⁴¹

For these purposes Henry Ford tried not to generalize saying about differences amongst the Jews in the United States, opposing rich and assimilated to poor and very religious, however, every attempt to distinguish real “conspirators” and ordinary Jews comes

¹³⁸ Henry Ford, *The International Jew*, 27.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 30.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 35.

¹⁴¹ Henry Ford, *The International Jew*, 27, 55.

eventually to the discussion of Jewish loyalty, as race, in general, to the institutions of American society.

Ford introduced himself as a prophet “who can read the signs of the times” and described Jewish conspiracy as an ancient plan which gradually comes true and appears to be a part of “ancient Jewish inheritance”, thus, creating the huge historical dimension for his concept.¹⁴² The Bolshevik revolution had demonstrated the real power of Jewish organization and endangered the rest of human civilization but, according to Ford, “the drift is toward America” because the capital of this “state of All-Judaan” was transferred to New York.¹⁴³

Scholars perceived *The International Jew* partly as a result of personal and business crisis which Henry Ford had in 1915-1920 since he had a lot of debts and World War I apparently threatened his business. Therewith, the discovering of “international Jewish conspiracy” behind World War I was rather popular amongst American business elites of that time.

The case of Henry Ford stands out of any other cases by few reasons. First, he was outstanding businessman that attracted wide attention of American public. Therefore, his views expressed in *Dearborn Independent* publications and excessive investments to its distribution had made it available throughout all country, whereas any other similar newspaper could be closed after the first issue. Also, being a domineering car-maker, Ford discovered that his business is very vulnerable and highly depends of untrustworthy political forces. Trying to stand aside from politics, he realized that his plans “challenged by bellicose, far-off kings in alien countries, not to mention a do-nothing president in far-off, East Coast

¹⁴² Ibid., 102.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 30.

Washington. Someone – the devious race of Oriental peoples- had to take the blame and personify the consolidation of unreachable, immutable powers.”¹⁴⁴

Eventually, his crusade against “Jewish power” was finished by the lawsuit *Sapiro v. Ford*, based on the individual label, which forced Ford to apologize and cease the publication of *Dearborn Independent* series.¹⁴⁵ The fact that American Jewish community was able to act in an orderly way and show the resistance in the time when antisemitism was on its peak demonstrates whole exceptionalism in a line of countries that underwent a wave of wide anti-Jewish attitudes in the interwar period. It also supports the idea that Jewish community was never excluded from political or economical life of the country, in spite of the anti-immigrant legislation adopted in 1920s. Perhaps, the ability of American Jewish community to stand against antisemitism and give its’ response each time when antisemitic allegations tried to enter public discourse appeared to be a basis for numerous conspirological speculations as in the United States so in the whole world that Jews have total control of the United States.¹⁴⁶

Nevertheless, interwar period gave a number of public figures who actively tried to put “Jewish question” on the agenda claiming “Mammon is their god – the god of greedy gold. Internationalism is their religion - the religion of fettered slavery” and trying to find the rational explanation of Nazi repressions towards Jews.¹⁴⁷

For example, Charles Coughlin in 1920 in his newspaper *Social Justice* after original changes of 1887 book *The Rothschilds* by John Reeves, had made it sound more frightening for a listener. So, in the passage where British premier minister Benjamin Disraeli at a family

¹⁴⁴ Neil Baldwin, *Henry Ford and the Jews: The Mass Production of Hate* (New York: Public Affairs, 2001), 327.

¹⁴⁵ Victoria Saker Woeste, “Insecure Equality: Louis Marshall, Henry Ford, and the Problem of Defamatory Antisemitism, 1920-1929,” *The Journal of American History* 91, no. 3 (December 2004): 878-879; Leo P. Ribuffo, “Henry Ford and *The International Jew*,” in *The American Jewish Experience*, ed. Jonathan Sarna (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1986), 176.

¹⁴⁶ Naomi W. Cohen, “*Friends in Court: An American-Jewish Response to Antisemitism*,” in *Living with Antisemitism: Modern Jewish Responses*, ed. Jehuda Reinharz (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1987), 314-332.

¹⁴⁷ Chas. E. Coughlin, *Am I An Anti-Semite: 9 Addresses on Various “ISMS” Answering the Question* (Detroit: The Condon Printing Co., 1939), 36, 79

gathering says: “Under this roof are the heads of the family of Rothschild – a name famous in every capital of Europe and every division of the globe. If you like, we shall divide the United States into two parts, one for you, James, and one for you, Lionel.”¹⁴⁸ Hereby, Coughlin again repeated main motive of American antisemitic conspiracy theories: the fear of external invasion.

Second World War and the legacy of Holocaust appeared to be the turning point in the development of ideological antisemitism in the United States. Though the accusations of antisemitic nature appeared during the Red Scare of 1940s-50s, in general scholars argue that it was the beginning of the new era in the history of Jewish community in the United States. Various historians even called the period from 1950s until today “The Jews’ Golden Era”, when the social restrictions were eased in universities, banks, businesses, etc. as well as the nation tried to analyze the experience of the age of McCarthyism.¹⁴⁹

Post-World War II period was also marked with the decline of antisemitism in the United States and general positive perception of the Jews and the State of Israel among Americans. Thus, national studies on antisemitism in the 1964 and 1981 had demonstrated the strong decline of some negative perceptions of Jewish community in the United States. The belief that Jews used shady business practices dropped from 46 to 22 percent. Belief that Jews were more loyal to Israel than to the United States dropped from 70 to 28 percent. The 53 percent of those who thought that the Jews controlled international banking system dropped to 22 percent. Those who believed that Jews cared only about Jews dropped from 50 to 17 percent and stuck together too much dropped from 56 to 40 percent as well.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Quoted in Donald Stuart Strong, *Organized Anti-Semitism in America* (Westport Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979), 60.

¹⁴⁹ Daniel Pipes, “The End of American Jewry’s Golden Era” in Manfred Gerstenfeld’s *American Jewry’s Challenge: Conversations Confronting the Twenty-First Century* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 191.

¹⁵⁰ Robert Michael, *A Concise History of American Antisemitism* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 209.

However, the crisis of American Left movement, Six Day War and civil rights movement made antisemitism a useful tool of Far Left rhetoric, thus, opening the whole new niche for its development. The Marxist shift in the development of the Left movement alienated a lot of Jews from its core. Moreover, the focus of leftists' critics was removed from the "system" to white-skinned bourgeoisie. The radicalization of blacks and a consistent introduction of anti-Israel rhetoric forced numerous Jewish supporters to reconsider their support of Leftist organizations and consequently weakened their abilities to influence on the ideological framework of these organizations. Finally, Six Day War triggered various critical reactions: starting with moderate points of view to allegations of "a theocratic, racist, expansionist and aggressive State" in "imperialist Zionist war."¹⁵¹

At the same time, the black nationalists, pursuing the creation of black self-consciousness, used antisemitic conspiracy theories to invoke the sense of mobilization against a common enemy. Historically, American government was not able to prevent growing chauvinism and anti-Semitism in the Black community. Furthermore, politicians made no active efforts for this. The alternative of an exceeding competent black Left scared American government much more than anti-white and radical right rhetoric blaming "white devils" for problems of their community.¹⁵² As a result, anti-white and antisemitic narratives became an important part of speeches of Malcolm X and Louis Farrakhan.

However, the speculations of far-right activists or Black nationalists could not be taken as a mainstream political discourse of American life as it had happened in various European countries. More likely, antisemitism and antisemitic conspiracy theories, in particular, in the United States would be kept on the individual, local level and promoted by certain groups of American society that shared the same firm set of beliefs. On one hand, far-

¹⁵¹ Herbert Aptheker, "Antisemitism and Racism," *Political Affairs* 48 (April 1969): 37

¹⁵² Gerald Horne, "Myth" and the making of "Malcolm X," *The American historical review* 98, no. 2 (1993): 443.

right activists' fears reproduced the main motive typical for the whole American conspirological tradition: based on the nativism, the fear of external invasion of foreigners embodied in various images. This trend, having a biggest impact on American antisemitic conspiracy theories, became a determinant and still exists in the margin parts of American public opinion.

On the other hand, antisemitic discourse of the second half of the twentieth century was augmented with the specific type of Left critics that basically referred to the critics of the State of Israel. To some extent it became a mainstream trend of public discourse concerning Middle East conflict and policies of the State of Israel in the region.

As contemporary English philosopher Bernard Harrison put it, we have to deal with the new version of political anti-Semitism in which

“the Jews” – not individuals, taken one by one, who happen to be Jews...but Jews viewed collectively – are seen as constituting reactionary conspiracy to promote a range of political developments obnoxious to a wide range of people on the liberal left, and in general to constitute, through the existence of the State of Israel, an obstacle, perhaps even...the main obstacle, to world peace.¹⁵³

And though the mentioned argument often used in the public debates as a proof of Israel's heavy pressure on media and politicians through affiliated persons and institutions, the number of publications had clearly demonstrated a certain anti-Israel biased nature of contemporary media coverage of Middle East political issues.¹⁵⁴

American antisemitism, even with the tendency to decline after Second World War, certainly did not become a “disappearing problem.”¹⁵⁵ Certain groups of society still have shared the idea of “Jewish conspiracy” in spite of numerous attempts to devaluate and

¹⁵³ Bernard Harrison, *The Resurgence of Anti-Semitism: Jews, Israel, and Liberal Opinion*. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 21.

¹⁵⁴ Zeev Chafets, *Double Vision: How the Press Distorts America's View of the Middle East* (New York: Morrow, 1985); Stephanie Gutmann, *The Other War: Israelis, Palestinians, and the Struggle For Media supremacy* (San Francisco, Calif.: Encounter Books, 2005).

¹⁵⁵ Quoted in Henry L. Feingold, *Finding a Conceptual Framework for the Study of American Antisemitism*, 319.

deconstruct that myth. Traditional prejudice towards Jews persisted and modified into politically correct critics of Zionism or Israel politics in the Middle East and, from time to time, channeled disaffection to the personal level of society. However, it clearly demonstrates that even the most radical politicians, though sharing antisemitic views, always tried to avoid its expression in campaigns of public opinions. The general positive perception of the Jews and Israel in contemporary United States is impressive as well.¹⁵⁶

Thereby, the American political tradition and multicultural character of society, taking into consideration historically conditioned specific features of American antisemitism, holds out a hope of further successful defense to antisemitic manifestations.

¹⁵⁶ The Pew Research Center For The People & the Press, *July 2006 Report: Americans' Support For Israel Unchanged by Recent Hostilities. Domestic Political Distemper Continues*. The Pew Research Center For The People & the Press. <http://people-press.org/reports/pdf/281.pdf> (accessed May 11, 2009).

Chapter 3.

Case Study: The Mearsheimer-Walt Controversy

Looking at the history of American antisemitism of the last hundred and fifty years and taking into consideration the recent trends of its development it is important to take as an example the case of the debates around the publication *Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*. This particular case will provide us with important evidence of how antisemitism is manifested in contemporary American society and introduced in public discourse. No discussion on contemporary anti-Jewish conspiracy theories would be complete without covering of certain debates to understand the specific features of conspiracy theories in the contemporary world. Moreover, these debates could demonstrate to what extent the contemporary positions of American Jewry differ from European countries in a sense of creation of successful standoff to antisemitic manifestations.

This chapter will first cover the debates around the publication and then, in the second part, the debates will be analyzed from the positions of political theory. The possible causes of the Mearsheimer-Walt controversy will be analyzed in the second part as well.

On March 23, 2006, *London Review of Books* published the essay of two professors John Mearsheimer and Steven Walt called *The Israel lobby*, the concise version of their Faculty Research Working Paper *The Israel Lobby and the U.S. Foreign Policy* placed on the Web-site of John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Some of the main points that the authors made in the essay were:

1. The support of Israel (including military and financial aid) had turned Arab states and Islamic opinion in general against the United States, thus weakening its security.¹⁵⁷
2. The United States has a terrorism problem “in good part because it is so closely allied with Israel, not the other way around.”¹⁵⁸
3. The Israel lobby in the United States, described as “the loose coalition of individuals and organizations who actively work to shape U.S. foreign policy in a pro-Israel direction” distorts American foreign policy and involves the United States into the unnecessary conflicts.¹⁵⁹ Thus, acting in favor of Israel and under constraint of AIPAC (American Israel Public Actions Committee) and other Pro-Israel institutions, the United States not only threatens its’ security but blockades American foreign policy in the Middle East region from the balanced activity.
4. The Israel Lobby suppresses all open debates about questions concerning American Middle East policy and American support of Israel. In addition, various think tanks shape public debates and actual policy appropriate to “The Lobby”; other organizations (for instance, Campus Watch) monitor what scholars write about American-Israel relations.¹⁶⁰ Anyone who criticizes Israeli actions or an enormous power of AIPAC to influence American policies “stands a good chance of getting labeled an anti-Semite.”¹⁶¹
5. The pressure of the Israel lobby was critical to make a decision to attack Iraq in March 2003, though many Americans believe that it was oil. “The war was motivated in good part by a desire to make Israel more secure” because the “‘real threat’ from Iraq was not a threat to the United States.”¹⁶²

¹⁵⁷ John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, (Harvard: John F. Kennedy School of Government, 2006), 1, [http://ksnotes1.harvard.edu/Research/wpaper.nsf/rwp/RWP06-011/\\$File/rwp_06_011_walt.pdf](http://ksnotes1.harvard.edu/Research/wpaper.nsf/rwp/RWP06-011/$File/rwp_06_011_walt.pdf) (accessed May 11, 2009).

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 5

¹⁵⁹ John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 14.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 18, 22.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 30.

In general, they concluded that the Israel Lobby in alliance with neoconservatives and Christian Zionists having no serious opponents or silencing them with boycotts and blacklists, causes troubles to the United States in the international arena and exposes its moral image, political and security interests.¹⁶³

The working paper triggered an impressive wave of publication immediately after it appeared on the web site both praising authors' frankness and labeling them as anti-Semites. The discussion continues until today sporadically escalating, while the authors attracted great attention and often make comments on various issues more or less connected with U.S.-Israel relations.

Basically, the opinions in the discussion could be divided into three groups: the first, those who supported Mearsheimer and Walt arguments, like David Duke, for whom the working paper became an academic basis for further development of anti-Jewish notions. Moreover, there was a subgroup of critics who were permitted to express their critical points of view but hardly could be called anti-Semites or persons who share conspiracy theories' notions (as, for example, George Soros). The second is a large group of scholars, politicians and public figures who perceived the paper very critically arguing that the style of the paper bears the stereotypes of classic antisemitic works and could be compared to *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. The third was the group of observers who examined the working paper from the positions of political analysis and its scientific value to describe an important phenomenon giving an evaluation to important questions of political reality through the prism of the Mearsheimer-Walt concept.

Basically, the debates were focused on two main problems: to what extent the essay of two prominent scholars could be called antisemitic by nature; and the second problem was to try to evaluate during the discussion to what extent the Israel lobby really shapes American

¹⁶³ Ibid., 41-42.

foreign policy agenda in the Middle East. Different groups concentrated their criticisms on these issues though the notion of antisemitism and “Jewish conspiracy” was a fine line in perceiving the working paper, and the whole discussion to some extent was built around the possible antisemitic character of mentioned essay. Thus, Anne-Marie Slaughter, the moderator of a discussion organized by the *London Review of Books* in October 2006, started with the question to John Mearsheimer: “Do you think your article was antisemitic?”¹⁶⁴

Apparently, the group that really appreciated the appearance of that publication and praised scholars’ courage to expose so called “Jewish conspiracy” in the United States was a wide coalition of persons, like David Duke and others who share various conspirological notions. It is noteworthy, that David Duke almost immediately made a comment to the *New York Sun* about that essay stressing its excellence while most of scholars argued the contrary. “It is quite satisfying to see a body in the premier American University essentially come out and validate every major point I have been making since even before the war even started.”¹⁶⁵

To some extent, the Mearsheimer-Walt paper indeed gave a basis for theoretical constructions or scientific references to the authors of antisemitic conspiracy theories. Thus, Joachim Martillo published online his own research on the Israel lobby and praised the professors for “a service for American public discussion by arguing their opinion as foreign policy realists” but obviously juggling with their main arguments.¹⁶⁶ Though, the author welcomed professors’ effort to open debates on the influence of “Judonia”, he expressed slight dissatisfaction of Professors’ Walt refusal to learn Yiddish for better, “non-

¹⁶⁴ Michael Cervieri, “The Israel Lobby: Does it Have Too Much Influence on US Foreign Policy?” Scribemedia Web Site, Windows Media Player video file, 7:00, <http://www.scribemedia.org/2006/10/11/israel-lobby/> (accessed May 11, 2009).

¹⁶⁵ Eli Lake, “David Duke Claims to Be Vindicated By a Harvard Dean,” *New York Sun*, March 20, 2006, <http://www.nysun.com/national/david-duke-claims-to-be-vindicated-by-a-harvard/29380/> (accessed May 11, 2009).

¹⁶⁶ Joachim Martillo, *The Israel Lobby and American Society. What the Israel Lobby Really Is: How It Hurts the USA What to Do About It* (A Working Paper), <http://www.eaazi.org/ThorsProvoni/Judonia1.htm> (accessed May 11, 2009).

exceptionalist understanding of Eastern European Jewish history” that has the crucial influence in that, precise concept of the Jewish conspiracy against the United States, United Kingdom and whole Europe as well.¹⁶⁷

Apart from the clearly antisemitic camp, there were a number of publications from public figures that have a status and general recognition but often mentioned in the context of progressive academics whose critique of Israel policies is often prone to the framework of “new antisemitism” (Tony Judt, Noam Chomsky, George Soros). Thus, Judt, a prominent historian, whom Abraham J. Foxman devoted the whole chapter in the book about Israel lobby, had tried to give a balanced evaluation of the Mearsheimer-Walt concept and the influence of an antisemitic label hanged up on professors. According to Judt, though the relatively obscure contents of the paper are of little interest to ordinary reader, the disproportionate Jewish public influence in the United States inevitably attracts interest from political extremes.¹⁶⁸ Moreover, the basic damage of American’s fear of antisemitism is threefold: it is bad for Jews since the menace of antisemitism is always challenging and should not be mixed with political critique of Israel; it is bad for Israel and threatens American participation in “a fast-moving international conversation.”¹⁶⁹

Chomsky, who is usually perceived as an author of specific antisemitic views and a person, whose views are often close to conspirological mentality, recognized “the courageous stand” of authors, saying that it is not really unusual to see that level of criticism. Antisemitic allegation is the way to protect the self-image of accusers and in case of the Mearsheimer – Walt case these allegations are obvious because they could not be ignored by reason of

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Tony Judt, “A Lobby, Not a Conspiracy,” *New York Times*, April 19, 2006, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/19/opinion/19judt.html?_r=1 (accessed May 11, 2009).

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

academics' public status and scientific achievements.¹⁷⁰ However, according to his point of view, the main argument of academics is not convincing because focusing mainly on AIPAC they are leaving aside the role of other lobbies, oil lobby, in particular. Since the general framework of government decision making is far from being transparent, it inevitably leaves room for conspiracy which has nothing to do with the influence of Israel lobby. Thus, admitting the usual place of antisemitic accusations in discourse concerning U.S.-Israel relations, Chomsky shifted the attention to structural inconsistencies of professors' arguments.

Later on, George Soros, the well-known philanthropist and businessman, when reports on his involvement in the creation of the new lobbyist group on behalf of Israel became more frequent, published his opinion on U.S.-Israel relations and AIPAC's role.¹⁷¹ Admitting the powerful influence of AIPAC in both Democratic and Republican parties, together with successful suppressing of critique, Soros called to view close and criticize the ways how AIPAC conducts its business. Moreover, he expressed the closed to Tony Judt point of view, arguing that open debates and critique of Israel without immediate antisemitic accusations is beneficial to Israel and the United States. Both covering political and moral aspects of debates, Soros noticed that the myth of all-powerful Jewish conspiracy is nourished by AIPAC's successful suppression of criticism and concluded that "demolishing the wall of silence that has protected AIPAC would help lay them to rest. A debate within the Jewish community, instead of fomenting anti-Semitism, would only help diminish it."¹⁷² In response to Soros, the initiative group formed an *Independent Jewish Voices* to voice its support and

¹⁷⁰ Daniel Pipes, "Interview on his new book 'Conspiracy: How the Paranoid Style Flourishes and Where It Comes from,' and his life", Interview by Brian Lamb, <http://www.skeptictank.org/hs/conspir.htm> (accessed 11 May, 2009); Noam Chomsky, "The Israel Lobby," <http://www.chomsky.info/articles/20060328.htm> (accessed 11 May, 2009).

¹⁷¹ Gregory Levey, "The other Israel lobby," Salon.com, December 19, 2006, <http://www.salon.com/opinion/feature/2006/12/19/israellobby/index1.html> (accessed May 11, 2009); Philip Weiss, "AIPAC Alternative?" *The Nation*, April 23, 2007, <http://www.thenation.com/doc//weiss> (accessed May 11, 2009).

¹⁷² George Soros, "On Israel, America and AIPAC," *The New York Review of Books* 54, no.6 (April 12, 2007), <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/20030> (accessed May 11, 2009).

expand the space within the Jewish community, since the “criticism of the Israeli position is often denounced as an expression of ‘self-hatred’ or anti-Semitism, ‘endangering the very existence of the Jewish state.’”¹⁷³

Though the series of articles that argued to avoid an antisemitic labeling of the essay, the opinion that the essay of Mearsheimer –Walt appeared to be a continuation of classic antisemitic works (as *Protocols* or Henry Ford’s *International Jew*) took an important and remarkable place in the debates. It differed from the emotionally dense comments expressed in numerous letters to editorial board of the *London Review of Books* to the detailed analytical works in which arguments were put in the wide context of contemporary antisemitism.

Already after the posting on the web-site of Harvard School of Government, Alex Safian from the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America wrote an article sharply criticizing authors. According to Safian, the work “is riddled with errors of fact, logic and omission, has inaccurate citations, displays extremely poor judgment regarding sources, and, contrary to basic scholarly standards, ignores previous serious work on the subject. The bottom line: virtually every word and argument is, or ought to be, in ‘serious dispute.’”¹⁷⁴ Recommending to Harvard University and Chicago University to distance from a “such shoddy, biased work”, author did not accused authors directly in antisemitism, though, introduced main points of scientific critique that later will be used by Abraham Foxman and Alan Dershowitz.

Simultaneously, Richard Baehr and Ed Lasky from *The American Thinker* published the article that became a virtually first critique of the working paper from the position that perceived the working paper as a demonstration of academic antisemitism. Refusing any

¹⁷³ Lisa Appignanesi, Geoffrey Bindman, Ellen Dahrendorf, Uri Fruchtmann et al., “Independent Jewish Voices,” *The New York Review of Books* 54, no. 8 (May 10, 2007), <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/20182> (accessed May 11, 2009).

¹⁷⁴ Alex Safian, “Study Decrying ‘Israel Lobby’ Marred by Numerous Errors,” The Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America Web-site. http://camera.org/index.asp?x_context=8&x_nameinnews=190&x_article=1099 (accessed May 11, 2009).

academic value of the working paper, they wrote that “it is a work without a trace of balance, in essence no more than an angry polemic disguised as academic research.”¹⁷⁵ Polemicizing with the Mearsheimer-Walt’s point that the Israel Lobby suppresses any criticism and their attempts to avoid those apparently negative labeling, Baehr and Lasky maintain that Israel is the only country in the region that allow to criticize its’ policies, though, totally demonized in an essay at every turn. Covering certain parts of essay and presenting an opposite point of view, they conclude eventually: “Walt and Mearsheimer have decided to navigate the waters of the Israel - hating, Jew - hating conspiracy theorists. There is a good reason for this. They seem comfortable in these waters.”¹⁷⁶ In such a manner, the key accusation in anti-Jewish conspiracy theories was introduced and later fortified by Max Boot in *Los Angeles Times*. The title of the article (“Policy Analysis – Paranoid Style”) by itself refers to the well-known essay of Richard Hofstadter *Paranoid Style in American Politics*. Moreover, it brackets the working paper with Welch and McCarthy, apparently reducing its’, even nominal, scientific importance. “For a more recent instance of the paranoid style, a modern-day Hofstadter could consult ‘The Israel Lobby and American Foreign Policy’ ... With 83 pages of text and 211 footnotes, the Mearsheimer-Walt essay (part of which appeared in the *London Review of Books*) is as scholarly as those of Welch and McCarthy—and just as nutty.”¹⁷⁷

Basically, all works are focusing on the methodological problem that was committed by authors of the essay. Describing it as “the loose coalition of individuals and organizations who actively work to shape U.S. foreign policy in a pro-Israel direction”, authors, thus, created the appearance of “the ‘pro-Israel’ American Jewish community as virtually

¹⁷⁵ Richard Baehr and Ed Lasky, “Stephen Walt’s War with Israel,” *The American Thinker*, March 20, 2006, http://www.americanthinker.com/2006/03/stephen_walts_war_with_israel.html (accessed May 11, 2009).

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Max Boot, “Policy Analysis – Paranoid Style,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 29, 2006, <http://articles.latimes.com/2006/mar/29/opinion/oe-boot29> (accessed May 11, 2009).

monolithic.”¹⁷⁸ Moreover, that assumption inevitably leads anyone who carefully reads the working paper, to the notorious stereotypes of antisemitic nature, as dual loyalty, etc.

Nicholas Goldberg in the *Los Angeles Times* fairly noticed on this subject: “it's no surprise that in the modern era, even to broach the idea of a ‘Jewish lobby’ is unacceptable. It's just not done in polite society -- even in situations in which there's some truth to it.”¹⁷⁹

Unsurprisingly, that one of the remarkable comments were expressed in the context of possible disloyalty of American Jews to the United States and perceived the essay as an attack on American society in general since it gives a powerful and gradually increasing support to Israel:

Yet it would be a mistake to treat this article on the ‘Israel Lobby’ as an attack on Israel alone, or on its Jewish defenders, or on the organizations and individuals it singles out for condemnation. Its true target is the American public, which now supports Israel with higher levels of confidence than ever before. When the authors imply that the bipartisan support of Israel in Congress is a result of Jewish influence, they function as classic conspiracy theorists who attribute decisions to nefarious alliances rather than to the choices of a democratic electorate.¹⁸⁰

Eliot Cohen, mentioned in an essay as a part of “the Lobby”, gave the more impressive, and more personal, reply to the essay. Calling it “a wretched piece of scholarship”, he projected accusations of the possible disloyalty to his own family where the oldest son serves as an officer in the U.S. Army in Baghdad.¹⁸¹ “Other supposed members of

¹⁷⁸ John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 5; Eric Alterman, “AIPAC’s Complaint: The Liberal Media,” *The Nation*, April 13, 2006, <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20060501/alterman> (accessed May 11, 2009).

¹⁷⁹ Nicholas Goldberg, “Who’s afraid of the ‘Israel Lobby’?” *Los Angeles Times*, March 26, 2006 <http://articles.latimes.com/2006/mar/26/opinion/op-goldberg26?pg=2> (accessed May 11, 2009).

¹⁸⁰ Ruth R. Wisse, “What They Are Saying?” *The Jewish Exponent*, March 30, 2006, <http://www.jewishexponent.com/article/2891/> (accessed May 11, 2009).

¹⁸¹ Eliot A. Cohen, “Yes, It’s Anti-Semitic,” *The Washington Post*, April 5, 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/04/04/AR2006040401282.html> (accessed May 11, 2009).

‘The Lobby’ also have children in military service. Impugning their patriotism or mine is not scholarship or policy advocacy. It is merely, and unforgivably, bigotry,”- concluded Cohen.¹⁸²

However, those who were involved in the political process evenly noted that the Mearsheimer-Walt essay not only distorts the real picture of political process in Washington, but exaggerates the power of Israel lobby.¹⁸³ Whereas Dennis Ross, mentioned in the essay as a part of “the Lobby” as well, confirming the strong positions of the Israel lobby in the Congress, disagreed that it has a direct correlation to American security and more importantly “leads to a cost for American foreign policy.”¹⁸⁴

Daniel Levy, the former advisor in the Israeli Prime Minister’s Office, gave an interesting contribution to the debates from the point of view of Israeli observer. Admitting the importance of the status of the authors, he called the tone of the essay “harsh” and “jarring”. However, he pointed that it is a good reason to reevaluate an importance of the Israel lobby in the United States to Israeli internal policy and security: “Sadly, if predictably, response to the Harvard study has been characterized by a combination of the shrill and the smug. Avoidance of candid discussion might make good sense to the Lobby, but it is unlikely to either advance Israeli interests or the U.S.-Israel relationship.”¹⁸⁵

However, the most visible and formidable argument was given by Alan Dershowitz already in April and by Abraham H. Foxman one year after the publication of the Mearsheimer-Walt essay. Dershowitz published his working paper *Debunking the Newest – and Oldest – Jewish Conspiracy: A Reply to the Mearsheimer-Walt “Working Paper”* in

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Madeleine K. Albright, “The Mighty and the Almighty,” Interview by George E. Rupp, Council on Foreign Relations, New York, May 1, 2006, http://www.cfr.org/publication/10606/mighty_and_the_almighty_rush_transcript_federal_news_service_inc.html (accessed May 11, 2009).

¹⁸⁴ National Public Radio, “Former Envoy: Israel Lobby Not All-Powerful,” Interview with Dennis Ross, <http://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=5539456> (accessed May 11, 2009).

¹⁸⁵ Daniel Levy, “So Pro-Israel It Hurts,” *Haaretz*, March 25, 2006, <http://www.pierretristam.com/Bobst/library/wf-144.htm> (accessed May 11, 2009).

April 2006 and it was posted together with Mearsheimer-Walt essay on the John F. Kennedy School of Government Web-site. However, Foxman published the whole book called *The Deadliest Lies: The Israel Lobby and the Myth of Jewish Control* in 2007 where he analyzed the arguments of professors' together with other contemporary anti-Israeli sentiments in greater details.

Dershowitz was the first who introduced the term “cabal” describing Mearsheimer-Walt's argument of American Jewish community influencing mainstream American media, academia and government.¹⁸⁶ That term was perceived as most painful by academics and often in numerous interviews and panel talks they tried to make their statement clear: “We never used the word 'cabal,'... It's not in our vocabulary. And I think it would be completely irresponsible to suggest that it is a cabal or a conspiracy.”¹⁸⁷ However, in virtue of primordial mistake to describe “The Lobby”, any further explanations did not have any real significance. Dershowitz, among other critique, focused on the nebulosity of academics' description of Israel lobby and marked though professors officially denied any antisemitic implications, some of the formulations are close to notorious antisemitic ideas of Pat Buchanan.

They identify an American-Jewish lobbying group as a ‘*de facto* agent for a foreign government,’ of having a ‘stranglehold’ over American policy, and of ‘controlling the

¹⁸⁶ Alan Dershowitz, *Debunking the Newest – and Oldest – Jewish Conspiracy: A Reply to the Mearsheimer-Walt “Working Paper”* (Harvard: Harvard Law School, 2006), under “Introduction” http://www.hks.harvard.edu/research/working_papers/dershowitzreply.pdf (accessed May 11, 2009).

¹⁸⁷ Alan Finder, “Essay Stirs Debate About Influence of a Jewish Lobby,” *New York Times*, April 12, 2006 <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/12/education/12professors.html?pagewanted=2&ei=5090&en=e8cbef1b639b998f&ex=1302494400&partner=rssuserland&emc=rss> (accessed May 11, 2009).

debate.’ These charges are indistinguishable from Pat Buchanan’s invocation of the U.S. government as Israel’s ‘amen corner’ and his reference to Congress as ‘Israeli Occupied Territory.’¹⁸⁸

Moreover, Alan Dershowitz fairly noted that even an argument that Israel lobby suppresses any critique or debates, implicitly refers to the broad spectrum of anti-Jewish sources.¹⁸⁹ Indeed, the example of Henry Ford could be mentioned in that context, who wrote in *The Independent Jew*:

Anyone who essays to discuss the Jewish Question in the United States or anywhere else must be fully prepared to be regarded as an Anti-Semite, in high-brow language, or in low-brow language, a Jew-baiter... until one looks at the letterheads of the magnates who write, and at the financial ratings of those who protest, and at the membership of the organizations whose responsible heads hysterically demand retraction. And always in the background there is the threat of boycott, a threat which has practically sealed up the columns of every publication in America against even the mildest discussion of the Jewish Question.¹⁹⁰

Giving further a detailed analysis of Mearsheimer-Walt’s essay, and actively challenging almost every point, author concluded: “The implication of Mearsheimer and Walt’s paper, that American Jews put the interests of Israel before those of America, raises the ugly specter of “dual loyalty,” a canard that has haunted Diaspora Jews from time immemorial.”¹⁹¹

Foxman’s book, published one year after the discussion had reached its’ high-point, basically resumed the main points of Mearsheimer-Walt’s critics and simultaneously put it in the wider context of controversies (giving examples of the former president Jim Carter and historian Tony Judt).

Foxman repeated one of the earlier arguments that academics’ work plays to the good for classic anti-Semites. “By promoting these beliefs and giving them a veneer of academic

¹⁸⁸ Alan Dershowitz, *Debunking the Newest – and Oldest – Jewish Conspiracy*, under “The Lobby”.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 13.

¹⁹⁰ Henry Ford, *The International Jew*, 27, 55.

¹⁹¹ Alan Dershowitz, *Debunking the Newest – and Oldest – Jewish Conspiracy*, under “Conclusion”.

respectability, Mearsheimer and Walt are playing into the hands of the David Dukes of the world.”¹⁹² For Foxman, some positive responses to their essay are a “testimony” to “the enduring appeal of anti-Semitic stereotypes and falsehoods in a troubled time when too many people are seeking the security and simplicity of scapegoating.”¹⁹³

As many observers noted, unlike other lobbies, discussions of AIPAC’s influence raises “the specter of poisonous old narratives about mysterious cabals and dual loyalties”.¹⁹⁴ Foxman in that sense argued that the notion of a small minority (only 2 percent of population) who distorts American foreign policy perfectly fits to old antisemitic tradition and involves all kinds of stereotypes. In the same fashion, the scholars distancing from these notions and explicitly disavowing them,

intentionally or not, activates that fantasy and draws upon the emotions it evokes. All they need to do is suggest that the Israel Lobby is a case of the few manipulating the many for their own selfish purposes, and the long history of anti-Jewish slurs centering on conspiracy theories is reborn and immediately leaps into action, whether consciously or not.¹⁹⁵

Basically, Abraham Foxman’s book incorporated both positions of strident critics of the essay and imbibed numerous opinions that analyzed the concept of Mearsheimer-Walt from the point of view of political science. However, the main angle of treating the essay was based on the notion that the essay is of antisemitic character and appears to be a disturbing example of how antisemitism through the critique of Israel gradually penetrates academia.

Most observers expressed astonishment why scientists who called themselves “realists” focused precisely on the one lobbying organization, and, thus, made their positions

¹⁹² Abraham H. Foxman, *The Deadliest Lies: The Israel Lobby and the Myth of Jewish Control* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 82.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Michelle Goldberg, “Is the ‘Israel lobby’ distorting America’s Mideast policies?” Salon.com, April 18, 2006, <http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2006/04/18/lobby/index.html> (accessed May 11, 2009).

¹⁹⁵ Abraham H. Foxman, *The Deadliest Lies*, 109.

more vulnerable to the claims in antisemitism. “This has the effect of making the Jews who read the paper feel unfairly singled out, and inspires much emotionally driven mishigas in reaction.”¹⁹⁶ Even the most rational and unemotional attempts to treat the essay inevitably ran into evident parallels with notorious anti-Jewish conspiracy theories, though later the authors tried to clear their positions again.¹⁹⁷

The authors are at pains to note that the Israel Lobby is by no means exclusively Jewish, and that not every American Jew is a part of it. Fair enough. But has there ever been an anti-Semitic conspiracy theory that does not share its basic features? Dual loyalty, disloyalty, manipulation of the media, financial manipulation of the political system, duping the *goyim* (gentiles) and getting them to fight their wars, sponsoring and covering up acts of gratuitous cruelty against an innocent people - every canard ever alleged of the Jews is here made about the Israel Lobby and its cause.¹⁹⁸

Having summarized the debates, now we can look at the possible reasons that triggered that controversy. The debates involved one important theme which most probably became a catalyst of all discussion while the accusations in antisemitism favored national attention to the sensitive subject of the debates and sharpened the clash of opinions. Since one of the main points in the essay was the scholars’ assurance that the current support of Israel is contrary to American national interests, it inevitably contributed to the appearance of notorious antisemitic stereotype that Jews are threatening American state. The main goal of current anti-Jewish conspiracy theory by itself consisted in the notion that American national interests were “hi-jacked” by Jewish Diaspora in the United States and its’ enormous influence. Though, the image of Israel as a main American ally was subjected to criticism.

Glenn Frankel from *The Washington Post* wrote that Steven Walt’s position makes an impression that he believes that “there is one correct and objective foreign policy that an

¹⁹⁶ Eric Alterman, “AIPAC’s Complaint: The Liberal Media,” *The Nation*, April 13, 2006, <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20060501/alterman> (accessed May 11, 2009).

¹⁹⁷ John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, “The Israel Lobby,” *London Review of Books* 28, no.9 (May 11, 2006), <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v28/n09/letters.html#1> (accessed May 11, 2009).

¹⁹⁸ Bret Stephens, “The Israel Conspiracy,” *The Wall Street Journal*, March 25, 2006, http://online.wsj.com/article/SB114325983069308278.html?mod=todays_us_opinion (accessed May 11, 2009).

enlightened elite would be able to agree upon if only those grubby ethnic interest groups were not out there playing politics.”¹⁹⁹ However, the question of American national interest in general and its’ correlation with Israel, in particular, was one of the most insistent in American scholarship throughout all post Cold War period. Whereas, the debates triggered by the essay of John Mearsheimer and Steven Walt became a part, though a relatively noticeable, of broader debates on American national interest.

Actually, the search for the national interest has been constant starting from the founding of the Federation and to the present. Each presidential administration elaborated its own foreign policy agenda according to its principles and priorities, though based on three main categories of the national interest which could be interpreted differently, depending on short-term concerns:

the pursuit of prosperity, identified diplomatically with the acquisition and retention of foreign markets for trade and investment; the defense and promotion of democracy and associated American values and institutions... and national security, a catch-all that took up where the original existential issue left off but expanded after 1945 until it nearly swallowed every other consideration of national interest.²⁰⁰

Indeed, it is really hard to determine one persistent and concrete national interest whose defense should determine foreign policy agenda. As Peter Trubowitz noted, the very definition of national interest is “a product of politics” and the United States does not have a unique “national interest”.²⁰¹

A complete change of geopolitical paradigm forced intellectual elites to search and shape the framework of foreign policy to determine priorities. Despite the various views (liberal, neoconservative, etc.), it was apparent that the status of the sole superpower demands

¹⁹⁹ Glenn Frankel, “A Beautiful Friendship: In Search of the Truth about the Israel lobby’s Influence on Washington,” *The Washington Post*, July 16, 2006, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/07/12/AR2006071201627_pf.html (accessed May 11, 2009).

²⁰⁰ Henry W. Brands, “The Idea of the National Interest,” *Diplomatic History* 23, no. 2 (Spring 1999): 239-240.

²⁰¹ Peter Trubowitz, *Defining the National Interest: Conflict and Change in American Foreign Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 4.

an active involvement in different global issues which consequently generates debates and disappointment in the extent of American involvement to these issues. However, a more important question is to what extent American interests and actions can be determined by different interest groups.

The increased influence of interest groups in the late 20th century aroused certain suspicion and critiques towards political institutions and interest groups, in particular. One point of these critiques argues that “a small number of interests and individuals conspire together to dominate societal policies and usually interests with more resources will obtain better results than interests that possess fewer assets and employ them less effectively”.²⁰² The second critique sees interests as generally succeeding in their goals of influencing government – to the point that government itself, in one form or another, provides a measure of protection to almost all societal interests.”²⁰³

Since the main threat represented by the Communist ideology disappeared, the questions of domestic politics have become more important for a certain part of American society. Domestic problems and budget constraints tended to dominate the presidential agenda and to overshadow foreign policy concerns.²⁰⁴ Consequently, according to Joseph S. Nye, “when the majority of the American public is indifferent and complacent about international affairs, the battlefields of foreign policy are left to those with special interests” and the result of this is “a narrow definition of the US national interest that often alienates other countries.”²⁰⁵

²⁰² Burdett A. Loomis and Allan J. Cigler, “The Changing Nature of Interest Group Politics,” in *Interest group politics*, 7th ed., Cigler, Allan J. and Burdett A. Loomis (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2007), 5.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ John F. Riley, ed., *American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Chicago: Council on Foreign Relations, 1995), 20.

²⁰⁵ Joseph S. Nye Jr., “The American National Interest and Global Public Goods,” *International affairs* 78, no. 2 (2002): 234.

A number of concepts emerged almost simultaneously at the end of the Cold War, trying to become fundamental in the attempts to determine the perspectives of American foreign policy. The first major group, neoconservatives, called “to act unilaterally, by force if needed, to prevent new centers of power from challenging America.”²⁰⁶ The second group, multinationalists, argued for the greater involvement of the U.S. in global affairs and called “to focus on the benefits of international stability in the global system.”²⁰⁷ As a result, interest groups tried to fit into both of conceptual frameworks to reach their goals. The United States, as a sole superpower in a uni-multipolar system of international affairs (in terms of Samuel P. Huntington), obtained a unique ability to maintain dominance that allowed certain interest groups to achieve advantageous decisions using American power.²⁰⁸

Still, as Arthur Schlesinger wrote, “without magnetic compass of national interest there would be no order or predictability in international affairs.”²⁰⁹ Such state of affairs apparently created tension and uncertainty. Samuel P. Huntington very accurately expressed these concerns, reflecting unsuccessful attempts to formulate clear American national priorities and interests:

For an understanding of American foreign policy it is necessary to study not the interests of the American state in the world of competing states but rather the play of economic and ethnic interests in American domestic politics. At least in recent, the latter has been superb predictor of foreign policy stands. Foreign policy, in the sense of actions consciously designed to promote the interests of the United States as a collective entity in relation to similar collective entities, is slowly but steadily disappearing.²¹⁰

Still, one of the key issues for American society in the foreign policy agenda was the Middle East and Israel, in particular. Despite the general public orientation on domestic

²⁰⁶ Robert Y. Shapiro and Yaeli Bloch-Elkon, “Foreign Policy, Meet the People,” *The National Interest* (September-October 2008): 40.

²⁰⁷ Abdul Aziz Said, *A Redefinition of National Interest, Ethnic Consciousness, and U.S. Foreign Policy*, in Abdul Aziz Said, ed., *Ethnicity and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Praeger, 1981), 18.

²⁰⁸ Samuel P. Huntington, “The Lonely Superpower,” *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 2 (March-April 1999): 36.

²⁰⁹ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Cycles of American History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1986), 76.

²¹⁰ Samuel P. Huntington, “The Erosion of American National Interests,” *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 5 (September-October 1997): 42.

problems, surveys conducted in the 1990s, showed that the public at large (64%) identify American “vital interest” with Israel and Israel still considered to be a key ally in the Middle East.²¹¹

However, an ambiguity in determining clear definitions of national interests have been generating critics of American involvement in Middle Eastern issues amongst certain observers. Starting from the beginning of the 1990s, much attention was focused on so-called Israel lobby which, according to some scholars, had an enormous influence on Congress and on the President. Already in 1990, Shlomo Avineri noted that Israel began to appear “in a problematic light within the US decision-making process” and it was mainly connected with the discussions about an enormous influence of Israel lobby that gradually emerged slight anti-Jewish and anti-Israel reactions.²¹²

Basically, the essence of the John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt’s working paper was a crucial impact of Israel lobby on American foreign policy which is inconsistent with American national interests:

The U.S. national interest should be the primary object of American foreign policy. For the past several decades, however, and especially since the Six Day War in 1967, the centerpiece of U.S. Middle East policy has been its relationship with Israel... the overall thrust of U.S. policy in the region is due almost entirely to U.S. domestic politics, and especially to the activities of the “Israel Lobby.” ... No lobby has managed to divert U.S. foreign policy as far from what the American national interest would otherwise suggest, while simultaneously convincing Americans that U.S. and Israeli interests are essentially identical.²¹³

Thus, without any fully formed concept of national interests, scholars argued that the Israel lobby is distorting U.S. foreign policy agenda and involves U.S. in unnecessary conflicts (such as invasion to Iraq and tensions with Iran). The fail to determine what is

²¹¹ Robert J. Lieber, “U.S.-Israel Relations Since 1948,” *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 2, no. 3 (September 1998): 15.

²¹² Shlomo Avineri, “Western Anti-Zionism: The Middle Ground” in *Anti-Zionism and antisemitism in the contemporary world*, ed. Robert S. Wistrich (New York: New York University Press, 1990), 175-176.

²¹³ John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 1.

American national interest and give an explanation of what is “Israel lobby” instead of “the loose coalition of individuals and organizations who actively work to shape U.S. foreign policy in a pro-Israel direction” as well as other methodological inaccuracies have raised accusations in antisemitism and put the publication in the center of the debates.²¹⁴ A certain crisis in determining common purpose and, consequently, national interest together with “ethnic consciousness-raising” caused concern amongst academics of further legitimization of “demands of ethnic constituencies to have the world’s leading power back their special agendas.”²¹⁵

American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the object of Mearsheimer and Walt’s main critics, in point of fact appears to be one of the most influential lobby organizations in the United States. A *Fortune* report of December 8, 1997, ranks AIPAC as the second most powerful pressure group in Washington (after the American Association of Retired Persons) and as the only foreign policy lobby in the top twenty-five lobbying groups in the country.²¹⁶ Nevertheless, it would be naive to assume that AIPAC is successful because of its enormous economic and political resources. AIPAC is successful rather because of its strategic advantage with the American public: when Israel government undergoes the criticism because of its politics, its support falls, when Palestinians and other Arab groups are seen as aggressors, support of Israel amongst Americans rises. As fairly notes Eric M. Uslander:

AIPAC...exerts considerable influence, but there is little reason to believe that it can change the direction of policy against the tide of public opinion. It is likely more accurate to say that AIPAC is most successful when public attitudes toward Israel are

²¹⁴ Ibid., 14.

²¹⁵ James Schlesinger, “Fragmentation and hubris: A Shaky Basis for American Leadership,” *The National Interest* 49 (Fall 1997): http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2751/is_n49/ai_20319593/?tag=content;coll (accessed on May 11, 2009).

²¹⁶ Tony Smith, *Foreign attachments: the power of ethnic groups in the making of American foreign policy* (Cambridge, Mass.; London, England: Harvard University Press, 2000), 110.

most favorable and that pro-Israel lobby is most likely to face difficulties in its agenda when the public is more critical of Israel.²¹⁷

Abramo Organsky very carefully described an importance of Israel lobby and numerous illusions around it for international affairs. Thus, for pro-Israel lobbyists, the belief that they have tremendous clout is a political resource. “Other U.S. political operatives can deflect criticism of policies unpopular among some constituents or in the Arab world by raising the bogey of Jewish pressure and domestic politics. The Israeli elite, meanwhile, may find faith in an effective American Jewish lobby reassuring in a hostile region. And Arab leaders may find U.S. conduct easier to swallow if they can blame Jewish lobbying. And for both opponents of U.S. policy at home and abroad, the Jewish scapegoat is useful propaganda to delegitimize disliked policies.”²¹⁸

To sum up, the working paper *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* touched the very sensitive and urgent question of national agenda. The debates about the power of “Israel lobby” in the U.S. have reflected public interest in foreign policy issues and had demonstrated general public disappointment in foreign activities of the current presidential administration. For instance, events of 9/11 and the subsequent military operation in Afghanistan, the failures of the military operation in Iraq, the crisis with Iran nuclear program had prompted a search of origins and explanations. According to Pew research conducted in October 2005, 48% wanted to see the troops brought home as soon as possible in contrast to nearly two years of sentiment in favor of seeing things through.²¹⁹ Moreover, as far back as July 2006, 65% expressed dissatisfaction with the way things were going in the U.S. that happened for the first time

²¹⁷ Eric M. Uslander, “American Interest in the Balance? Do Ethnic Groups Dominate Foreign Policy Making?” in *Interest group politics*, 310.

²¹⁸ Abramo F.K. Organsky, *The \$36 Billion Dollar Bargain*, (New York and Oxford: Columbia University Press, 1990), 27-31.

²¹⁹ The Pew Research Center For The People & the Press, *October 2005 Report: Plurality Now Sees Bush Presidency as Unsuccessful Discontent with Bush and State of The Nation Ever Higher*. The Pew Research Center For The People & the Press. <http://people-press.org/report/259/plurality-now-sees-bush-presidency-as-unsuccessful> (accessed May 11, 2009).

since George W. Bush was elected a President of the United States.²²⁰ Unusual information protection of the Bush administration already triggered, for instance, the numerous conspiracy theories surrounding the work of the “9/11 Commission” and questioned its approach to policy making. However, the forthcoming military operation in Iran that has been discussed in that period obviously threatened even greater diplomatic and human losses for the United States than the current operation in Iraq. Under these circumstances the explanations of conspiriologological nature could better absorb and reflect the general suspicions of recent government foreign policy since one of the main qualities of conspiracy theories is being active in the time of crisis.

The working paper of Mearsheimer-Walt was supposed to give a sort of explanation to some of these issues from the point of view of political science, reflecting the general dissatisfaction of society, but consequently caused a bitter dispute and polarization of opinion. In the context of certain crisis of foreign policy and lack of public consensus on this matter, the focus on precisely the Israel lobby and its’ determination as a crucial factor of current failures of foreign policy inevitably raised accusations in antisemitism that basically specified the whole framework of debates.

Taking in regard the specific attribute of conspiracy theories to become more active during the time of crisis, the emergence of the theory that accuses a certain part of the American Jewish community in conspiracy

Furthermore, the accusations in antisemitism that obviously dominated during over the period of the discussion demonstrated another important feature which is characteristic to the history of American antisemitism. Taking into consideration a peculiarity of Jewish-

²²⁰ The Pew Research Center For The People & the Press, *July 2006 Report: Americans’ Support For Israel Unchanged by Recent Hostilities. Domestic Political Distemper Continues*. The Pew Research Center For The People & the Press. <http://people-press.org/reports/pdf/281.pdf> (accessed May 11, 2009).

Gentile relations in the United States, the Jews had completely different status in the society with regard to the European tradition. The Jewish community was more secure and had a lot more opportunities to oppose any threat or attempt to reconsider their social positions. Even in the age when antisemitic conspiracy theories were on the high point, in the 1920s, American Jewish community had enough resources and capacity to oppose Henry Ford and force him to close *The Dearborn Independent* and apologize.

However, after the foundation of the State of Israel and successful achievements of the Jews in the United States, Diaspora Jews had faced the new problem. As Alan Dershowitz expressed it: “Despite our apparent success, deep-down we see ourselves as second-class citizens –as guests in another people’s land... we worry about charges of dual loyalty, of being too rich, too smart, and too powerful. Our cautious leaders obsess about what the ‘real’ Americans will think of us.”²²¹ Nevertheless, that point looks rather exaggerated, it allows explaining the role of antisemitism in the debates around the publication of John Mearsheimer and Steven Walt. A certain part of American Jewish community, though having a relatively stable positions in society, perceived any critique of Israel or its policies as “the most virulent display of antisemitism” and fearing the emergence of new phenomenon that could destroy their secured existence in the United States.²²² Thus, the usage of antisemitic accusations toward the working paper of Mearsheimer-Walt was used as a defensive tool to secure positions of the community. Whereas the conceptualization of the working paper as a contemporary manifestation of the “paranoid style” and conspiracy theory virtually cancelled out any claims for seriousness of the research and attached to the discussion unnecessary emotional overtone.

²²¹ Alan Dershowitz, *Chutzpah* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1991), 3.

²²² Barry Rubin, “American Jews, Israel, and the Psychological Role of Antisemitism” in *Antisemitism in America Today: Outspoken Experts Explode the Myths*, ed. Jerome A. Chanes (New York: Carol Publishing, 1995), 136-137.

In a light of above analysis, it is clear that on the one hand the debates demonstrated the capacity and influence of American Jewish community to defend itself from any, even relatively overemphasized, threat. On the other hand, the storm of criticism gave certain basis for real anti-Semites to construct their conspiracy theories using the example of Mearsheimer-Walt's working paper as an illustration to the potential of "all-powerful Jewish conspiracy."

Nevertheless, the debates demonstrated a circumstantial role of antisemitic stereotypes and antisemitic conspiracy theories in contemporary politics. Though, the subject of discussion was initially very complicated and sensitive, numerous methodological mistakes that were made by scholars definitively weakened the whole concept and made it vulnerable to various critique. However, American society, that has a stable support and increasing general positive perception of Israel, in the absence of clearly formulated priorities and interests of foreign policy, runs a risk to face another, perhaps, more serious than the case of Mearsheimer-Walt, controversy.

CONCLUSION

Professor Robert Wistrich called his book on the history of anti-Jewish attitudes *Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred* and in many respects was right. More than two thousand years have clearly demonstrated how various anti-Jewish stereotypes have gradually changed forms while simultaneously preserving their destructive nature. Starting with religious prejudices and European medieval harassments, anti-Jewish attitudes transformed into secular prejudices and, already in the beginning of the nineteenth century determined one of the basic conspirological notions – the myth of the international Jewish conspiracy. Being one of the first conspiracy theories in the history of Western civilization, it became, in words of Norman Cohn, “a warrant for genocide” in the Nazi Germany and then was suddenly revived in Muslim world in the second half of the twentieth century.

Nevertheless, the history of American antisemitism stands out sharply in comparison to most European countries in terms of the status of Jewish population amongst other ethnic communities. In the case of the United States, the traditional anti-Jewish preconceptions that designated the Jewish life in Europe were perceived differently, and sometimes were rather an advantage than an imperfection. Thus, Jewish activities in business and entrepreneurship smoothly fit into the American basic set of values. Perhaps, the Jewish emancipation in Anglo-Saxon societies (England and the United States of America, in particular) progressed relatively successfully because of the culturally entrenched capitalist principles that judged people’s efficiency than their ethnicity.²²³

²²³ For a comparison with the history of American Jewish community, could be taken the history of the Jewish emancipation in England. For more detail see Geoffrey Alderman, “English Jews or Jews of the English Persuasion? Reflections on the Emancipation of Anglo-Jewry” in *Paths of Emancipation: Jews, States and Citizenship*, eds. by Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), 128-156.

In the post - Second World War period even though old-fashioned antisemitism was preserved by certain groups of society, it again demonstrated its flexibility in elaboration of the ideology of anti-Zionism, a more sophisticated form of Jew-hatred. Penetrating the sphere of politics and international relations, and often pushing against a moral angle, the new type of antisemitism focused primarily on Israel, introducing the left-wing rhetoric of antiglobalism and colonialism.²²⁴ It overlapped with another negative trend – an extraordinary dissemination of conspiracy theories of all kinds and, moreover, its strengthening in public discourse through the sphere of entertainment. These two tendencies, taken together with certain political ambiguity that appeared amongst American political elites, turned out to be dangerous for the American Jewish community and were a breeding ground for the conspiracy myth creation. In the moment of certain political crisis that came out acutely during the second presidential term of George W. Bush, numerous conspiracy theories appeared to be the comfortable explanation of ongoing failures in internal and foreign policies. In that context, the concept of Mearsheimer-Walt that used ambiguous and provocative terms describing the nature of that political crisis inevitably regenerated the whole set of antisemitic stereotypes and connotations.

The case of the Mearsheimer-Walt working paper and further debates allowed me to draw a few conclusions. Taking into consideration the general history of Jewish–Gentile relations in the American milieu it could be argued that the Jewish community in the United States has enough capacity to stand against any antisemitic manifestations. On one hand, that capacity is based on the well-organized communal structure and readiness to follow the main values of American state, while, on the other hand, the American political system by itself protects the rights and freedoms of every citizen without a distinction of race, gender or political views. This advantage of the American political system predetermined its general

²²⁴ Mark Strauss, “Antiglobalism’s Jewish Problem,” *Foreign Policy*, November 12, 2003, <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/display.article?id=2791> (accessed May 11, 2009).

successful development and attractiveness for numerous talented people from all over the world. However, in the case of the American Jewish community it also gave an opportunity to isolate any radical and destructive ideologies, particularly of antisemitic nature, before it gained palpable support. This still distinguishes the United States from lots of European countries. Most probably, this feature gives a basis for the partisans of antisemitic conspiracy theories to claim that the United States and its policies are orchestrated by the “Jewish conspiracy”, or the Zionist Occupation Government – the nightmare of American right-wing activists.

The emergence in the 1960-1970s of the new concepts based on the Left critics of the State of Israel fleshed out antisemitic discourse with the idea of the “reactionary Jewish conspiracy” that suppresses any debates concerning Israeli policies. Furthermore, the complexity in definition and differentiation of the critique of Israeli policies and anti-Jewish accusations inevitably leaves a room for various, rather sophisticated conspirological concepts of antisemitic nature, and emotionally enriches every discussion. Certainly, it is a very complicated topic and to find a fine line between balanced critique and allegation is a difficult task. That is why one of the main challenges for the scientific community should be the development of a relevant framework allowing a discussion and debate of various actual issues in contemporary politics.

Indeed, there always will be people prone to believe in various conspiracy theories. It is in human nature to believe in myths based on the typical stereotypes elaborated during the course of the history of interethnic relations. The openness of these debates and transparency of public institutions, though it is a Thule, is probably among the most important achievements of democratic society and perhaps the only way to avoid some interethnic tensions. Therefore, living in the “age of conspiracism”, the contemporary Western society more than ever needs a balanced approach and historical memory in dealing with interethnic

relations in an effort to evade future conflicts the results of which would be impossible to predict in the context of “global village”.²²⁵

²²⁵ Jonathan Alter, “The Age of Conspiracism,” *Newsweek*, March 24, 1997, <http://www.newsweek.com/id/95563> (accessed May 11, 2009).

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