



**Klaus Holz.** *Nationaler Antisemitismus: Wissenssoziologie einer Weltanschauung.* Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, HIS Verlag, 2001. 615 S. EUR 35.00 (gebunden), ISBN 978-3-930908-67-7.



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**Published on** H-German (November, 2004)

Klaus Holz's book is an attempt to analyze the connections between the development of discourses of nationhood in European states and anti-Semitic ideas. Holz argues that the origins of Antisemitism (at least in its modern variants) are to be found in the way that linguistic codes function to define those who belong and those who do not, through a process of linguistic image construction that might justly be compared to negative integration. While what Holz offers is not particularly novel in terms of approach or practical application, he does provide an in-depth analysis of the way in which identity formation functions at the level of language, and of how Antisemitism comes to form a sort of skeleton key for the resolution of instabilities in such processes.

The scholarly and political discussion of Antisemitism has undergone numerous twists and turns since it was permanently imprinted on the intellectual consciousness of Europe and the United States by Nazi atrocities. Antisemitism was certainly a matter of interest before the Second World War, particularly in the wake of the Dreyfus Affair in France, and the emergence of public debate on the topic in Germany after the publication of Heinrich von Treitschke's essay "Unsere Aussichten" (1879). With the emergence of the Nazi project for the complete elimination of the Jews, the interest in this topic has taken on an increased urgency and centrality. This

has been further heightened by the highly conflictual position of Israel in international politics. This latter point is worth mentioning both because of its significance for this book, as well as for its author. Since his habilitation at Leipzig in 2000 (for which this work was the Habilitationsschrift), Holz has been active in scholarly debates about Antisemitism, both as a professor as well as in his capacity as the director of the Evangelisches Studienwerk e.V. Villigst (a scholarly institution linked to the Lutheran Church). He caused a minor stir in German public culture in 2001 when he co-authored an essay with Elfriede Mueller and Enzo Traverso in which they argued strenuously against the conflation of Anti-Zionism with Antisemitism within the German left.[1]

Holz states at the outside that he has two major scholarly goals for the book. First, Holz wants to address the connection between nationalism and Antisemitism, which to his mind has yet to be systematically investigated. Second, Holz wants to address what he views as the "uncoupling" of sociology from the study of Antisemitism. In respect to Holz's first claim, one might point out that the general topic of the relationship between nationalism and Antisemitism is not exactly undiscovered territory. Both Hannah Arendt and the critical scholars of the Frankfurt School recognized the intimate connection between the nation and various forms of racism. More