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INTRODUCTION

Enduring Marks of Inferiority

ON AUGUST 11 AND 12, 2017, white supremacists, as the *Washington Post* reported, "mostly young white males," gathered in Charlottesville, Virginia, for the Unite the Right rally, ostensibly to protest the removal of the statue of confederate general Robert E. Lee by the City of Charlottesville and the renaming of the park in which the statue had stood as "The Emancipation Park."[1] The rally attracted hundreds of white protesters and a diverse group of counterprotesters, each representing different—and clashing—visions of American society and polity. On the evening of August 11, the white supremacists marched through the University of Virginia, torches in hand, chanting "Blood and soil!" "You will not replace us!" "Jews will not replace us!" and "White Lives Matter," with some donning medieval Christian symbols. The next day the events turned violent. A white supremacist drove into the crowd of counterprotesters, killing thirty-two-year-old Heather Heyer, and injuring nineteen others, while still many others were physically attacked and beaten.

During the civil trial of the organizers of the Unite the Right Rally in Charlottesville in 2021, the *Washington Post* reported, "Defendants dropped the n-word, expressed admiration for Adolf Hitler and trafficked in racist pseudoscience."[2] Two of the defendants, who represented themselves in court, cross-examined the plaintiffs and other witnesses, including their co-conspirators, one of whom they asked, "to tell his 'favorite Holocaust joke.'" Even defense attorneys "embraced the racist rhetoric." One, "repeatedly used the word 'k—-' in hopes that it would 'desensitize' the jury."

The events in Charlottesville mixed antisemitism and anti-Black racism—a characteristic of the so-called "white supremacist" or "white nationalist" groups. But what has been, until recently, often missing from

the coverage and description of these groups is that they represent a distinctly white Christian supremacy, which has far deeper roots than modern racism and modern antisemitism. The groups now dubbed "white nationalist" or "white supremacist," occasionally "Christian nationalist," express "Christian racial populism" through white domination over both non-whites and non-Christians.[3] Their ideology, articulated in the US through the defense of the Confederacy and through antisemitic chants, such as "Jews will not replace us," and, in Europe, through anti-Muslim and antisemitic attacks, vociferously rejects the modern idea of equality—legal and social—between them as white Christian people, on one hand, and Jews and people of color, on the other.

The two sharply contrasting visions of a state were colliding in Charlottesville—one embracing multicultural equal citizenship, another ethnonational white Christian identity. Both emerged in the Western world in the aftermath of the American and French Revolutions, but their roots run deeper. Until the late eighteenth century, European society, which included colonies, had been organized around social estates and legal pluralism—the concept of equality before law did not exist. With the Enlightenment, ideas about equality and rights began to be debated, and, following the American and French Revolutions, conceptualization of what citizenship and nationhood meant started to take shape. In Europe, two dominant ideas of citizenship and nationhood emerged: one, rooted in a political national identity, gradually and grudgingly included all those who inhabited a political state; the other, grounded in an ethnic, or ethnoreligious, identity, tended to exclude people who were not considered part of a given ethnic group. In some European states these ideas clashed, sometimes violently. In the US, similar debates about equality before law and about belonging emerged, but only a little later, as the country began to wrestle with the legal meaning of the phrase "We, the People" in the preamble to the US Constitution and the ideals of equality contained in this document and in the Declaration of Independence. But those debates were grounded in ideas about race and color.

While modern antisemitism and modern racism are, indeed, as George M. Fredrickson has argued, the outgrowth of processes associated with modernity, and while, indeed, "white supremacy attained its fullest ideological and institutional development" in the US between the 1890s and 1950s, in South Africa in the twentieth century, and in Nazi Germany, the ideology espoused by white supremacists in the US and in Europe is rooted in Christian ideas of social and religious hierarchy. These ideas developed, gradually, first in the Mediterranean and Europe in respect

to Jews and then in respect to people of color in European colonies and in the US, before returning transformed back to Europe.[4] That vision of social hierarchy is built on the foundations of early Christian supersessionist theology that negated Judaism as it claimed to "replace" it, and is hence sometimes called replacement theology or replacement theory. Ancient and medieval Christians developed a sense of superiority over Jews, whom they saw as carnal and inferior, and rejected by God. Christians, they asserted, were now the new Israel, a new chosen people, spiritual and superior. Jews, then, as Geraldine Heng has argued in another context, became "constitutive, not incidental" to the formation of Christian identity; indeed, "Christian identity . . . was constructed not only in opposition to Judaism . . . but also in terms of Judaism."[5] Early Christian theology created, to use George Yancy's term, "epistemic orders" of social and religious hierarchy, in which Jews played a crucial role in the process of shaping Christian identity rooted in dominance rather than humility epitomized in Jesus's "turn the other cheek" doctrine.[6] For Christians, Jews became necessary "contrast figures" created and used to validate Christians' claims of theological replacement and superiority.[7]

With political power gained by Christians and the Christian empire taking shape in the fourth century, Christian supersessionism became Christian supremacy with its theological superiority now embedded into law and Jews specifically targeted in degrading legislation. Over the centuries in medieval Europe, Christian supremacy became more deeply entrenched in law, theology, and culture, clashing at times with historical reality, when real Jews of flesh and blood did not easily fit into the ideas Christians held about them. This Christian supremacy turned into white Christian supremacy with the colonial expansion in the early modern era, its Christian identity never lost even if individuals associated with it might not have been devoted churchgoers.

This book focuses on the interplay between law, theology, and culture, arguing that the modern rejection of equality of both Jews and Black people in the West is the legacy of Christian supersessionism, a theological concept developed in antiquity and implemented in law and policy when Christianity became a political power—its fruit Christianity's claim to superiority and dominance. Scholars of antisemitism and racism have frequently focused on theology and culture, gesturing only slightly, and sometimes not at all, toward the role law has played in that history.[8] But, as Ian Haney López has argued in the context of American law, law "transforms" ideas into "lived reality," law "reifies" them.[9] Haney López's argument about the capacity of the law to "shape and constrain how people think

about the world they inhabit" can be expanded beyond American conceptions of race to premodern social and religious order.[10] According to Haney López, "Legal rules and decisions construct races through legitimation, affirming the categories and images of popular racial beliefs and making it nearly impossible to imagine nonracialized ways of thinking about identity, belonging, and difference." The same can be said about constructions of religious difference and legal affirmation of religious beliefs and hierarchy in medieval Europe. When that theological understanding of the relations between Jew/Judaism and Christians/Christianity became implemented into law, that relation transformed into Christian supremacy. Through "its coercive potential," law reified theological ideas of Christian supersessionism and superiority over Judaism.[11]

The following pages explore the relationship between Christian theology and law to demonstrate how legal and theological frameworks that were created centuries ago within Western Christianity led to social and legal exclusion of, and in modern times also a denial of equality to, Jews and Black people. The crux of the argument, then, lies in the Christian sense of superiority, a mental habit that developed first in a religious sense with regard to Jews and then transformed also into a racialized dominance, accelerating when Europeans expanded their political reach beyond Europe and established slaveholding empires in the early modern period. This was not only a cultural but also a legal transformation. Law created more tangible structures that justified and reinforced Christian domination and sense of superiority through, to quote Haney López, "promulgation and enforcement of rules that determine[d] permissible behavior."[12] This legal framework was first deployed in relation to Jews and later in relation to colonized non-Europeans of color. Paradoxically, if Christians condemned Jews and Judaism as committed to "law," it was through law that Christians turned theological exegesis into social and political hierarchy and, ultimately, also racial order. The book treats the word "supremacy" in its literal—not figurative—sense of being in "the position of supreme or highest authority or power."[13] In that sense, "supremacy" is linked to political and legal structures, which simultaneously both reflected and shaped cultural attitudes.

The ensuing chapters explore the history of the idea of Christian domination and its evolution not just into white supremacy but specifically white Christian supremacy as it exists today on both sides of the Atlantic through the lens of one motif—that of slavery and servitude. Slavery and servitude connect anti-Jewish sentiments—at first theological and in modern times also racial—with anti-Black racism. Slavery and servitude,

though a legal nonracialized reality in antiquity, came to be attached to Jews as a metaphorical idiom when Christian writers began to describe Christianity's relation to Judaism and to think of Jews as doomed to "perpetual servitude." This theological idea was then translated into law, creating among Christians habits of thinking about Jews as perpetually inferior.[14] Now, the Christian idea of Jewish inferiority has become supported by both theology and law. In this rendering, centuries before slavery and servitude came to be associated with Blackness, freedom became linked to Christianity and servitude to Judaism.

In late antiquity and in the Middle Ages, Blackness was sometimes, though not always, manifested in the Christian world in negative terms as an association with ugliness, sin, or Islam, but "dark-skinned people" were still seen "as eligible for salvation," even as saints.[15] With conversion to Christianity their earlier ugliness and debasement disappeared, and their handsomeness as Christians once more visually reasserted Christian preeminence. But in the early modern period, the legally sanctioned reality of enslavement of black Africans in the European colonies created a more defined mental and legal hierarchy delineated along color lines. Freedom and liberty now came to be linked not only to Christianity but to whiteness, and servitude and enslavement to Blackness.[16] One inferior to the other.

The concept of "perpetual servitude" of Jews and the legacy of real enslavement of millions of black Africans and Black Americans then have been behind the obstinate refusal to admit Jews and Black people into a polity on equal terms.* But—and this is important to stress—while the idiom of "perpetual servitude" of Jews and the reality of enslavement of Black people share roots and remain at play within the dominant European and Euro-American Christian culture and society, one is not the cause of the other. To be sure, the idea of Jewish servitude and inferiority was articulated first, at a time when Christianity was still an emerging and

* I have chosen to capitalize "Black" to denote ethnicity and people of the African diaspora, who have developed a historically distinct identity, so Black Americans, Black people, but I have kept it lowercase for "black" as a color, including to describe the dark color of skin, hence black Africans. This is a choice recommended by the National Association of Black Journalists and is accepted by the *Chicago Manual of Style*. This is to correspond with a similar convention used with "Native Americans," "Arab Americans," "Jewish Americans," and so on. I do not capitalize the word "white," since that word does not denote a self-embraced ethnic identity, except for white supremacists. Instead, I use "European" or "Euro-Americans" if I want to denote whiteness as related to European identity. Though I rarely use the term "African American" to avoid de-Americanizing Black Americans, when I use the term, it is to parallel "Euro-Americans."

persecuted sect, as a form of reassurance and justification of Christianity's theological claims. Only later, after Christianity turned into a Christian supremacy, was the power of the law deployed to reify Christian conception of theological superiority over Jews. The ideology of inferiority of Jews, thus, had developed before it became embodied in law, and even then, Jews were not enslaved. In contrast, the practice of enslavement of black Africans developed at first in a military and economic context that had more to do with Christendom's expansion during the Iberian Reconquista than racial ideologies, which in fact would develop later to justify the enslavement of Africans and the resulting social, political, and economic hierarchies. As Barbara Fields has observed, "it was not Afro-Americans . . . who needed a racial explanation; it was not they who invented themselves into a race. Euro-Americans resolved the contradiction between slavery and liberty by defining Afro-Americans as a race."[17] In short, the idea of Jewish servitude emerged among a socially insecure new sect to justify a new theological idea, whereas racial hierarchies emerged from a position of power to justify the reality of slavery. Echoes of both still reverberate today.

It would be impossible to write an exhaustive history of white supremacy, as it evolved over centuries in different places and times, or even a comprehensive history of racism and antisemitism and their overlaps and distinctions. It would be similarly impossible to write a history of the role of Western Christian theology in racism and antisemitism—there were regional and denominational differences. There is also no single story of Christian antisemitism and racism. Christian beliefs were used both to justify persecution of Jews and to protect them from such persecution, even if sometimes the desire to protect was only motivated by a desire to convert.[18] Today, too, white evangelical Christians might espouse both antisemitic and racist views, while claiming to have "warm feelings toward African Americans" and expressing their staunch support for Israel.[19] Similarly, biblical texts were used both to excoriate modern slavery and to staunchly defend it. Slavers, slaveholders, and abolitionists, Black and white, often drew on the same texts to argue their opposing sides. And, today, some modern Christian theologians grapple with questions of race and racism, while others continue to espouse racist ideology.[20]

But slavery and servitude provide a lens onto confluences of racism and antisemitism and onto the role law and theology played in these histories, allowing to see through some of these difficult-to-disentangle complexities. The concepts of "servitude" and "slavery," with which the idea of Christian domination is tightly connected, help illuminate the roots of the

obstinate objections to Jewish and Black social and political equality, the anxiety about Black and Jewish presence within white Christian society, and fear of their power: "Jewish power" everywhere around the world and specifically in America also "Black power" or, as it was known in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, "the Negro rule."

The lens of slavery and servitude also provides an opportunity for a useful comparison over the *longue durée* not to find (false) equivalences or engage in competition over who was hated and who suffered more. It reveals with more clarity mechanisms and processes involved in the production and entrenchment of social hierarchy and ideas about each group that continue to persist and remain, as the events in Charlottesville demonstrate, seemingly impossible to eradicate.[21]

For example, because the modern history of Jews, at least in the United States and some parts of Western Europe, is that of social climb and because the myth of "Jewish money and power" is one of the most insidious and enduring antisemitic myths, the attachment of the mark of servitude to Jews in (white) Christian society is often forgotten. But, perhaps paradoxically, this theologically rooted trope of Jewish inferiority and the idiom of servitude as it was applied to Jews for centuries help explain the very myth of "Jewish power." The antisemitic trope of "Jewish power" is a sign both of Jewish "emancipation" from the theologically grounded idea of Jewish servitude in modern times and of Christian rejection of Jewish equality and social advance. In contrast, the legacy of Black slavery and of white desire to control Black bodies undeniably still marks the lived experiences of African Americans even today, even of those most educated and accomplished, who continue to be seen through the prism of "the historical power of the white gaze," which, as George Yancy has argued, "distorts, caricatures, oppresses, and dehumanizes Black bodies," and which denies them intellectual, professional, or political accomplishments.[22]

Thus, both the elision, in white society, of intellectual accomplishments of Black people and the myth of Jewish power are interlocked through and rooted in the trope of slavery and servitude—historically, an idiom for Jews and the de jure reality for Black people. Both represent, to use Justice Roger Taney's phrase used in his infamous opinion in *Dred Scott*, "enduring marks of inferiority," as understood by the dominant white Christian society. Both stem from the same root and both are tightly connected in (white) Christian habits of thought, even if that ontological link is now often forgotten.[23] Both Jews and Black people became contrast figures in Western Christian culture, serving to reinforce, as Angela Onwuachi-Willing has argued in another context, "differences in group power" and to

maintain power structures through assertions of social hierarchy by holding them in subordinate and degraded positions.[24]

While anti-Jewish hostility is documented already in pre-Christian Greek and Roman texts, it was not marked with the anti-Jewish idiom of servitude.[25] That idiom developed in the context of theological debates in the early days of Christianity, when Paul evoked Isaac and Ishmael, Sarah and Hagar, and Jacob and Esau, to explain the relationship between Jews and the followers of Jesus. Christians were now like Isaac, children of the promise, they were the sons of a free woman; Jews were the sons of a slave woman, Hagar; they were like Ishmael.[26] But it was the verse from the book of Genesis, "an elder shall serve the younger," mentioned in the Epistle to Romans and then reinterpreted by Augustine that would leave a lasting mark on the legal status of Jews within Christendom.[27] In the Middle Ages, what was once a scriptural exegesis entered the law and began to play an important role within European Christian society in the development of what sociologist Orlando Patterson dubbed "mental structures," shaping and hardening a Christian sense of superiority and dominance, resulting in "unconscious habits" of thought and behavior that remain difficult to root out.[28] This superiority was later visually depicted in public art in the figures of the *Ecclesia*, Christianity/Church—a triumphant queen, and the *Synagoga*, Judaism/Jewish Law, a humiliated, blindfolded maiden.

Christian theological dominance and legal and political supremacy became a European Christian white supremacy in the era of European expansion and Europe's exploitative encounter with non-Europeans.[29] And even if color prejudice and negative connotations about "blackness" had developed already in antiquity, with early Christians linking blackness with sin, and whiteness with grace, the connection between Blackness and slavery was not made, as David Goldenberg has shown, until Muslim conquests of parts of Africa and the increase of black African slaves within Muslim society.[30] In Christian Europe, it was the Iberian Peninsula that became the conduit through which European Christians developed legal and theological justifications for the enslavement of black Africans. European Christian consciousness, both the existing color prejudice, which developed in the context of early intra-Christian religious polemic, and the European Christian sense of superiority, which had emerged at first in regard to Jews, now provided fertile ground for the development of racialized Christianity, providing epistemic justification and explanation for the territorial, economic, and political exploitation of people in the Americas and Africa.[31] Indeed, as M. Lindsay Kaplan has shown, "the

construction of Jewish servitude through the figures of both Ishmael and Ham help[ed] sanction and strengthen the legitimacy of Muslim servitude. The identification of the Muslim sphere of influence with Northern Africa subsequently facilitate[d] the translation of these figural discourses of enmity and servitude to black Africans in the Iberian appropriation of African lands and in the sixteenth century establishment of the trade in the enslaved people."[32] The discourse on Jewish servitude, so deeply engrained in Christian legal and theological culture, Kaplan argues, helped "transfer the notion of hereditary inferiority to Africans"; in the Americas it would become, by legal design, hereditary—indeed perpetual—enslavement.[33]

But the association of Blackness with slavery and inferiority, and the racialization of slavery took longer. In the British colonies in North America, "the law," Barbara Fields has shown, "did not formally recognize the condition of perpetual slavery or systematically mark out servants of African descent for special treatment until 1661."[34] It is no coincident that by the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a verb stemming from the Latin *denigrare*, used in antiquity and the Middle Ages to mean making something black or dyeing something black, and occasionally also blacken or sully (a soul, for example, could be "sullied," *denigrata*, with sin), acquired in different European languages a new dominant meaning, signifying degradation, demeaning, debasement, defamation, and "blackening character," pushing out the original meaning from dictionaries.[35] In the early modern period, thus, the word *denigrare* or "denigrate" distinctly linked "black," a component of the word, with lower status. The word's changed meaning stemmed from the association between Blackness and slavery.

This process took place almost at the same time as the word "white" was beginning to gain currency to define a superior social and legal status. The English verb "to denigrate," in its meaning "to degrade" or "to demean," thus, is deeply connected with the history of European enslavement of black Africans.

Printed books—with stories and images—both reflected and helped deepen these prejudices, existing and emerging, against Jews and dark-skinned non-Europeans, searing in the European Christian imagination anti-Jewish and anti-Black stereotypes that are still at play in modern white Christian supremacist circles. But books, language, and culture were not enough. The lasting structures of racism were built into law to support the new form of slavery officially sanctioned in the European colonies, thus creating and then reinforcing the most malignant anti-Black attitudes that still endure in a white—and aspiring-to-whiteness—society.

Then and now, literature, art, and law have played crucial roles in this process. As George M. Fredrickson has put it, anti-Black racism is "the child of slavery" but it has "outlived its parent" and even "grew stronger and more independent after slavery's demise."[36]

And so, over time, white European Christians branded both Jews and people of color with "badges of servitude" and inferiority, making their full social acceptance as equals problematic. The existence of legally sanctioned enslavement of Black people had an even deeper impact on the rights of Black Americans and other people of color. Blackness became tightly associated with slavery and, by extension, with a degraded status, developing "a racial folklore," as W. E. B. Du Bois observed, "grounded on centuries of instinct, habit, and thought and implemented by the conditioned reflex of visible color."[37]

But there was an even more insidious legacy of the ideas of slavery and servitude. In the United States, the legacy of Black enslavement and Black people's inferior legal status became part of the legal fabric and language of the country's conservative jurisprudence grounded in case law and precedent. Ideas of Black equality and citizenship thus required fundamental legal changes—these sparked violent opposition among whites. And in Europe, the tenacity of theologically rooted ideas about Jewish inferiority became evident during debates over the meaning of citizenship that took place in the aftermath of the French Revolution; the weight of the idiom of Jewish servitude was so heavy that—even though Jews were never enslaved—it led to the denial of Jewish equality and challenge of their right to belong in newly forming nations. It continued even after Jews eventually, if reluctantly, were granted citizenship rights de jure as the admittance of Jews to the ranks of citizens sparked an antisemitic backlash, marked at times by what Christhard Hoffman, Werner Bergmann, and Helmut Walser Smith called "exclusionary violence."[38]

In 1796, during a debate over citizenship of Jews in the Republic of Batavia, Dutch theologian and politician Ysbrand van Hamelsveld asked, "Will we continue to regard the Jewish people as alien residents or will we go further and regard them as Dutchmen, as members of the Batavian people—in other words, not only as our fellow human beings but also as our fellow citizens—on equal footing with Dutchmen?"[39] By the nineteenth century, some Europeans—in France, Germany, and elsewhere—responded to that question in the negative. In 1819, a German writer Hartwig von Hundt-Radovsky declared that "granting civic rights to Jews was an injustice perpetrated by the government against the non-Jewish inhabitants."[40] He claimed that while the non-Jews "founded the state,

defended and preserved it with their wealth, blood, and lives," Jews, "a class of morally and spiritually degenerate people (who have used the state but never benefitted it)" would soon get an upper hand over Christians. A few decades later, Bruno Bauer, a German theologian, bemoaned "the birth of a new epoch, which will cost the Christian world great pains," and asked, "are the Jews to suffer no pain, are they to have equal rights with those who fought and suffered for the new world?"[41] Bauer asserted that "the idea of human rights was discovered for the Christian world in the last century only. It is not innate to men. . . . Human rights are not a gift of nature or of history but a prize which was won in the fight against the accident of birth and against privilege which came down through history from generation to generation." As long as Jews remained Jews, they did not deserve those rights; they lived, after all, in a "Christian state." These European thinkers expressed anxieties about citizenship and equality of Jews—anxieties that emerged in Europe with the French Revolution and its ideology of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity," which raised questions as to whom these ideals applied.[42] Indeed, soon after the Revolution, both in France and in European territories that came under French control and influence, the breadth of the ideal raised questions about whether Jews and other previously marginalized groups, especially Black people, were eligible for citizenship and equality.

The inclusion of Jews "tested the universalist claims of the French revolutionaries," and so did "the colonial question."[43] The status of hundreds of thousands of Black slaves and tens of thousands of free men of color in the French colonies became a subject of fierce debates. White Europeans, even those committed to "liberty, equality, and fraternity," had serious misgivings about freedom and equality of Black people. One author did not even refer to the freed Black people living in the colonies as "inhabitants" or "residents," a term he seems to have reserved for white colonists. Blackness, in European minds, was indelibly tied to slavery and servitude, with the word "Negro" interchangeably used with "a slave," confirming, as the French bishop and revolutionary leader Henri Grégoire noted, that "the whites, having power, have declared, against justice, that dark skin excludes one from the advantages of society."[44]

In the US, the language and debates surrounding the status of Black Americans was eerily reminiscent of that concerning Jews in Europe—with a clear distinction of the existence of de jure enslavement of Black people as opposed to only the theologically grounded idea of slavery and servitude of Jews. The question of citizenship of people of color did not garner direct attention when the Constitution was ratified, although racial

eligibility was addressed in the 1790 Naturalization Act, which limited naturalization to "a free white person," thus inscribing whiteness into the legal fabric of the country. Whiteness remained a requirement in the subsequent revisions of the law.

But the explicit question about the meaning of citizenship drew national attention only decades later. In 1820, following the admission of the Territory of Missouri to the Union, a debate erupted in the Congress over a clause in the Missouri constitution prohibiting "free people of color" from settling in Missouri in perpetuity, raising questions about potential restrictions of the rights of citizens of other states. The defenders of that clause claimed, as did Philip Barbour of Virginia, that "the Constitution of the United States was framed by the States respectively, consisting of the European descendants of white men; that it had a view to the liberty and rights of white men."[45] The Missouri debate exposed the lasting fissures around race and Black people's belonging, as well as sharp differences over the question as to who was included in "We, the people." It revealed what Judith Shklar called "enduring anti-liberal dispositions that have regularly asserted themselves, often very successfully, against the promise of equal political rights contained in the Declaration of Independence and its successors."[46] As the 2016, 2020, and 2024 US presidential campaigns demonstrated, these debates have not been relegated to the past. Over the last two centuries, these different visions periodically have clashed with each other.[47]

In the end, even after both Jews and people of color were admitted into de jure citizenship, they remained vulnerable outsiders fighting for their right to belong. And despite their demands of equality, dignity, and respect, and even despite their undisputable accomplishments and wealth, they were always reminded about their outsider and—in the eyes of white Christians in Europe and the United States—inferior position. For Jews, it was social exclusion; for Black Americans, it has been relentless efforts to undermine their citizenship rights that are still taking place, as exemplified by the denial of legitimacy of Barack Obama's presidency by questioning his birth certificate and by restrictions on voting rights passed across the country.

That outsider status is linked to that past association with slavery and servitude. As Orlando Patterson has argued, "the slave was conceived of as someone who did not belong because he was an outsider," at the same time, "the slave became an outsider because he did not belong."[48] The trope of slavery and servitude coupled, in modern time, with racial theories made the acceptance of Jews and Blacks into white Christian political

bodies difficult. The levels and intensity of that rejection varied in different times and places.

American history has been shaped by racial history and Black Americans have held a central place in that history. As Justice John Marshall Harlan wrote in his dissent in *Plessy v. Ferguson*: "The destinies of the two races in this country are indissolubly linked together."[49] He echoed Frederick Douglass's statement from 1854 about the United States as a land "peopled by what may be called the most dissimilar races on the globe. The black and the white—the negro and the European—these constitute the American people—and, in all the likelihoods of the case they will ever remain the principal inhabitants of the United States, in some form or other."[50] Yet, as both historical sources and recent events demonstrate, despite the ideal of equality enshrined in the American Declaration of Independence, dominant American national identity has been shaped by and grounded in racial identity and in the exclusion of Black individuals from citizenship—with de jure discrimination of Black Americans lasting until at least 1964 and de facto social discrimination persisting even until today.[51] To be "American" has often been explicitly or implicitly understood to be white.[52] This is how Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell sees it. On January 19, 2022, commenting on voting laws, McConnell stated, "The concern is misplaced because if you look at the statistics, African American voters are voting in just as high a percentage as Americans," sparking a backlash.[53] Jews in the United States, by virtue of their eligibility for naturalization according to the 1790 Naturalization Act and its subsequent versions, were not excluded from citizenship; indeed, they were, like many other European immigrants, "white by law," even if their social belonging has been questioned.[54]

But in Europe, modern national identities were fashioned inseparably from the idea of social exclusion of Jews, which has become almost integral to ethnonationalist ideologies that developed in the nineteenth century and which continues. And although that exclusion of Jews failed de jure and Jews were in fact granted citizenship in Western European states, across Europe, "anti-liberal dispositions," to use Judith Shklar's phrase, often clashed with the modern "promise" of equal rights enshrined in liberal constitutions.[55]

The anxiety about the inclusion of Jews and people of color as equals in Western society stems from the conceptions of social hierarchy and legal structures whose roots go deep to early Christian supersessionist theology, which defined itself and Christian identity by deprecation of Jewish ceremonies and beliefs, and then, by extension, of Jews themselves. Once

combined with political power, Christian supersessionist theology became Christian supremacy, and, in the early modern and modern era, especially, but not exclusively, in the United States, a white Christian supremacy, constructed around identity firmly rooted in whiteness and Christianity and in social rejection of Jews and of people of color, especially of Black people. So, while Robert P. Jones has recently sought to demonstrate the "legacy of white supremacy in American Christianity," this book, by taking a deeper chronological look, flips the argument to show "the Christian legacy in white supremacy," for Christian supremacy predated white supremacy and has left its mark on the legal and mental structures that continue to reverberate in what is now commonly called white supremacy.[56]

If white American identity has been shaped by the presence of Black Americans, both enslaved and free, the same can be said about Jews and Christianity and about Jews and European history—their histories, too, have been "indissolubly linked." Those "indissolubly linked" histories cannot be fully grasped without understanding the deeply rooted "mental structures" or unconscious habits that have shaped culture, social relations, and the law, along with the instincts and habits of prejudice.[57] To that long history, as James Baldwin stressed, "we owe our frames of reference, our identities, and our aspirations."[58] That long history continues to play a role in our society, causing further rifts. To paraphrase Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, understanding that history is essential to finding remedies, and to become, as Vice-President Kamala Harris has often said, "unburdened" by what has been.[59] Part of that process is understanding the central role the two marginalized groups, Jews and Black people, have played in Christian European history and imagination and in shaping European and Euro-American identity. Both Jews and Black people have been, to use Frederic Raphael's words, "the margin that runs down the middle page" of Western history.[60] And, as Glynis Cousin and Robert Fine have argued, drawing attention to earlier scholars such as W. E. B. Du Bois, it is worth "reconnecting the study of racism and antisemitism" and "overcoming methodological separatism," because "racism and antisemitism have a connected history."[61] Cousin and Fine traced that connection to European modernity. But some strands of that shared history run deeper.

While the role of Christianity has been acknowledged in the history of antisemitism, indeed the historiography of antisemitism is often a history of Christian thought, the connections between the strand of Christian thought that was shaped by Christian attitudes toward Jews and Judaism and modern anti-Black racism has often been neglected.[62] The inverse

is also true: while the role of Christianity is being scrutinized in the history of anti-Black racism and white supremacy, the impact of Christian anti-Jewish attitudes on the history of racism and on the same white Christian identity that is now under scrutiny is often missing.[63] This has been so in part because studies of antisemitism have paid scant attention to discourses that do not pertain to Jews, and studies of race and racism have typically focused on the oppression of people of color, especially Black Americans.[64] While that link was not lost on scholars in the early decades of the twentieth century, since the 1960s this connection has been forgotten.[65]

But both modern antisemitism and racism continue to be linked in both contemporary white Christian supremacy and at the roots that helped shape and nourish European Christian social and mental habits and legal structures, first, as M. Lindsay Kaplan has recently demonstrated, in regard to Jews, then in similar discourse also against Muslims and black Africans.[66] Within the Christian world, over time, Jews came to be seen as contrast figures, or as Geraldine Heng put it, "figures of absolute difference," never to be fully accepted in the social or political body, even if in reality Jews were frequently not that different from their neighbors in look or status; people of color, too, became contrast figures whose exclusion came to be both determined by social values and law.[67] Jews as contrast figures became key for the development of Christian identity in the same way as Black people became key in the construction of white identity. These stories sometimes overlapped, diverged, ran parallel, or crisscrossed each other, but the history of European dominance and of white supremacy is rooted in and intertwined with the history of Christian supersessionism and Christian supremacy, and that story began with Christianity's theological relation with Jews and Judaism.

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