

{essays in history}

The Annual Journal produced by the Corcoran Department of History at the
University of Virginia

Antisemitism and Catholic Colonial Algeria in the Time of Dreyfus: Recovering the Conspiratorial World of La Croix de l'Algérie et de la Tunisie, 1899



Robert Isaacson

Volume 47 (2014)

George Washington University

Introduction

From 1894 to 1899, Captain Albert Dreyfus, an Alsatian Jewish artillery officer, languished in prison on Devil's Island after the French Army General Staff wrongfully convicted him of treason and espionage. The campaign for his release, organized by his family and supporters, along with revelations of an army cover-up, saw the so-called "Dreyfus Affair" become the major focal point of French public discourse at the turn of the century. Partisan camps of "Dreyfusards" and "anti-Dreyfusards" waged a war of words against each other as they debated Dreyfus' innocence and, implicitly, what it meant to be French in the Third Republic. Marked by an effusion of antisemitic vitriol, this debate has been characterized by Frederick Brown as a polarizing battle between two rival visions of France.^[1] This battle at times extended to the streets, as it did in response to the publication of Émile Zola's 1898 "J'accuse." Zola's open letter indicted the Army General Staff for antisemitism and cover-up, and prompted reactionary riots across France, the most violent of which occurred in French colonial Algiers. There, the burning of Zola in effigy sparked a riot in which 158 shops were destroyed, six Jews were assaulted (two fatally), and 9 rioters, 47 police, and a large but unknown number of Jews were seriously injured.^[2] As the site of some of the only murderous violence during the Affair, colonial Algeria deserves particular attention.

Examining the Dreyfus Affair from the perspective of French colonial Algeria illuminates the place of antisemitism in Algerian political culture, the development of modern French antisemitism, and the relationship between antisemitism and colonial racism.^[3] According to George Fredrickson, antisemitism, like all Western racisms, is predicated on a presumption of basic human equality rooted in Christian and Enlightenment universalism.^[4] For those uncomfortable with the implications of this leveling premise, racism offered a means of maintaining social hierarchies by characterizing its victims as innately and irredeemably sub-human. These essentializing distinctions provided

the rationale both for the exclusion of Algerian Muslims from French citizenship, and popular efforts to characterize naturalized Algerian Jews as un-French foreigners.[5] Each form of racism, however, is particular to its socio-cultural context, invariably enmeshed in local struggles to define the boundaries of national and group identity.[6]

Close examination of the 1899 reporting of *La Croix de l'Algérie et de la Tunisie*, one of 86 local subsidiaries of the Catholic Assumptionist daily *La Croix*, provides an illustrative microcosm of these processes in the under-studied space of French colonial Algeria. Deriving from the political and economic particularities of its Algerian context and drawing upon the popular antisemitic currents of the metropole, *La Croix de l'Algérie's* antisemitism was no mere rhetorical device. Rather, the antisemitic beliefs of the paper's editors were at the nucleus of a reductionist, explanatory worldview disseminated by the paper that made sense of the chaotic French political scene by attributing France's societal ills to a conspiracy of anti-national elements. This dualistic "conspiratorial worldview" is reflected in the journalistic and editorial choices of *La Croix de l'Algérie's* editors, who perceived France to be locked in a life-or-death struggle between patriotic and subversive forces. The paper's antisemitism was additionally more consistent and coherent than has been previously recognized, and its synthesis of diverse antisemitic tropes presents a challenge to the binary division of modern and early-modern antisemitisms. Furthermore, the antisemitism of *La Croix de l'Algérie* was largely divorced from the tropes and vocabulary of colonial racism, illustrating the coexistence of two distinct racisms within the Algerian colonial population that were nonetheless ideologically disconnected from one another. Analyzing *La Croix de l'Algérie* serves to reintegrate Algeria into the narrative of the Dreyfus Affair, and reveals how its antisemitic currents were both entangled with and distinct from those of the metropole.

Scholarly and Historical Background

The French Third Republic was facing a moment of uncertainty and tension in the 1890s, which the catalyst of Dreyfus' supposed treason significantly exacerbated. In 1889, the threat of a coup by Georges Boulanger exposed the growing resonance of reactionary nationalism in France, while the Panama Scandal of 1892 had enflamed class tensions. French defeat in the 1870-1871 Franco-Prussian War and the subsequent

loss of Alsace-Lorraine to Germany had also galvanized nationalist opinion in France, and saw the army become “a critical source of national pride.”[7] Émile Zola’s claim that the army had conspired to wrongfully convict Dreyfus was intolerable for many nationalists, as indicated by the massive wave of anti-Dreyfusard riots sparked by the publication of Zola’s “*J’accuse!*”[8] Meanwhile, the anticlerical legislation of the early 1880s had dealt a painful blow to French clericalism that produced a reactionary spike in Catholic anti-republicanism and antisemitism.[9] As a result of this legislation, clerical personnel were removed from schools, charities, and hospitals, Catholic teaching orders were suppressed, and control over marriage and divorce was passed to civil authorities. Funding for Catholic schools was similarly siphoned off for state education programs in the metropole and abroad, arousing clerical resentment. It was in this context that Édouard Drumont’s 1886 antisemitic text *La France Juive* became a national best seller. These currents came together in Dreyfus’ conviction, which sparked debates about the boundaries of Frenchness that exposed the contested nature of republican universalism.[10]

While the Dreyfus Affair did have a dominant place in French public discourse in the 1890s, the extent to which a “battle” between “two Frances” actually took place has been the subject of significant scholarly debate.[11] Discussion of the wave of antisemitic expression that accompanied the Dreyfus Affair is similarly extensive, and reflects ongoing disputes regarding the resonance of antisemitism across all sectors of the French population.[12] Robert Byrnes and Pierre Pierrard have argued that Dreyfus-era antisemitism was distinctly “Catholic” in its adoption of religious antisemitic tropes and its reactionary defense of clerical institutions, reflecting a rejection of the secularizing tendencies of French republicanism. By contrast, Stephen Wilson has concluded that antisemitism was an extreme aspect of a general reaction against modernization and rapid social change that, through hostility to Jews who seemed to embody these changes, offered both ideologically satisfying explanations and solutions to the discontented. Wilson has contended, however, that the Affair and its attendant antisemitism evoked little interest outside France’s urban centers, and has suggested that the rural population was especially “indifferent,” a position that is echoed by Michael Burns.[13] Pierre Birnbaum has challenged these interpretations as relying too heavily on Parisian archives, suggesting

that “the antisemitic movement [had] unsuspected depth” as evidenced by the lack of “outrage” against press and political antisemitism, major antisemitic demonstrations, and the election of deputies on antisemitic platforms.[14] Like Ruth Harris, however, Birnbaum ultimately contends that the division between “two Frances” was more illusion than reality. Although scholars have been correct to challenge the “two Frances” interpretation of this period, scholarly efforts to do so must acknowledge that many widely disseminated Dreyfus-era voices, *La Croix de l'Algérie* included, genuinely perceived such a divide, and acted upon this perception.

While scholarly discussion of the Dreyfus Affair has focused primarily on the extent of the Affair’s resonance with the (especially rural) French public, little effort has been made to address the attitudes of French colonial populations. This gap is particularly glaring in the case of Algeria which, as the site of some of the only murderous antisemitic violence of the Dreyfus-era and a stronghold of France’s short-lived political antisemitic movements, should be included in our analyses of this period.[15] Indeed, the colonial backdrop of *colon* antisemitism has received only limited scholarly attention, and little attempt has been made to juxtapose colonial racism and settler antisemitism in an effort illuminate the degree to which these coexisting racisms may have shaped and informed one another.[16] While Alice Conklin has suggested that “the practice of colonialism may well have reinforced and enabled...other forms of discrimination in the metropole in ways that have not yet been recognized,” Conklin’s speculative remark is unaddressed in her own study of French colonial racism in West Africa.[17] A step in this direction was recently made by Lizabeth Zack, who has argued that the 1897-1902 Algerian “*crise antijuive*,” a period of intense political mobilization and unrest centered around the local antisemitic movement, was central in the development of *colon* political identity and consciousness. Zack has illustrated how *colons* at times participated in antisemitic and anti-Muslim activity as a means of demonstrating their own Frenchness to a metropole that did not always view the settlers as genuinely French.[18] Many *colons* resented, for example, that Algeria’s Jews had been naturalized *en masse* in 1870, while citizenship was not extended to Algerian-born non-French Europeans until 1889. [19] Nonetheless, while Zack has revealed how the political mobilization of the settler antisemitic movement galvanized both the “French” and

“Algerian” identities of the *colons*, our understanding of the ideological dimensions of Algerian settler antisemitism remains incomplete.

Closely proximate to the French metropole, and legally considered a part of it, Algeria and its antisemitic currents were deeply entangled with those of mainland France, and the colony was something of a hotbed of Dreyfus-era antisemitism. Algeria was the home of major antisemitic authors and politicians, including the popular Italian-born mayor of Algiers, Max Régis, and the infamous antisemitic theorist and Algerian deputy, Édouard Drumont, whose works circulated frequently between France and North Africa.[20] Drumont belonged to a cohort of Algerian deputies elected on antisemitic platforms. Indeed, it is telling that four of Algeria’s six deputies, one of its three senators, and many of its municipal leaders in 1898 were “declared antisemites.”[21] According to Jonathan Gosnell, the colony’s vibrant press also “constituted a medium in which literate, French-speaking groups were drawn into French social, political, and economic life,” strengthening the ties and flow of ideas between colony and metropole.[22]

However, *colon* antisemitism also derived significantly from Algeria’s colonial status, particularly the uneven extension of French citizenship to its diverse population. While the republican doctrine of “*francisation*” held that Algerian Jews constituted an assimilable population that should be naturalized, many *colons* disagreed. The 1870 Cremieux Decree that granted mass citizenship to Algeria’s 35,000 Jews aroused considerable resentment, particularly from the many Spanish, Italian, and Maltese *colons* who would not be naturalized until 1889.[23] It was only in the late 1880s, thanks largely to the naturalizations of 1889, that the number of French citizens in the colony first outnumbered the foreign European population.

Calls to abrogate the Cremieux Decree were accordingly diverse and lasting. Some claimed that Jews, as a “natural commercial group,” would undermine the French military, while others doubted the compatibility of rabbinic jurisdiction and Jewish culture with the principles of the republic. Others saw the decree as a provocation to Algeria’s restive subject population of Muslims, or felt that Jews, supposedly voting collectively at the behest of their rabbis, and making up almost a tenth of Algeria’s non-Muslim population in 1896, would dictate control over the lucrative local government.[24] Algeria’s largely urban-dwelling Jewish

population was also a source of economic competition for European *colons*, arousing further resentment. Colonial anxieties that control of the colony might slip into the hands of Algeria's sizable Muslim population were also considerable, and the 1881 *Code de l'indigénat*, which further enshrined Muslims' subject status, was received well by the settlers.[25]

Colon antisemites accordingly drew on both local and metropolitan grievances as they articulated their Frenchness through an anti-Jewish idiom, and by the 1890s tensions had risen considerably. In 1892, the antisemitic movement in the colony founded its own political organization, the *Ligue Anti-Juive d'Algér*, while Max Régis' daily newspaper, *L'Antijuif Algérien*, boasted a local circulation of over 20,000. [26] At a popular level, pogroms had taken place in the 1880s and late 1890s, expressing discontent with the enfranchisement of Algerian Jews. Like continental France, Algeria was also gripped by a wave of antisemitic riots in response to Zola's "*J'accuse*" "on a scale unknown in the metropolitan territory," and *La Croix de l'Algérie* cited frequent chants of "Vive Régis! Vive Drumont!" and "Down with the Jews!" at public gatherings.[27] The 1898 riots reflected the combination of local and metropolitan factors that fueled *colon* antisemitism: while Zola's "*J'accuse*" was the key catalyst, Charles-Robert Ageron has argued that the riots were deliberately incited by local politicians who felt that they were being kept out of power by Algerian Jews. Indeed, Régis clearly viewed Jews as the chief obstacle impeding *colon* autonomy when he promised an Algerian mob that they would "water the tree of our liberty with Jewish blood." [28] The potential electoral and economic power of Algerian Jewry transformed them, in the eyes of *colon* agitators already anxious about their own status, into a threat that could not be ignored.

La Croix de l'Algérie and its Worldview

The 1899 reporting of *La Croix de l'Algérie* is a particularly instructive case study for colonial Algerian antisemitism. By 1899, the Dreyfus Affair was reaching its climax with the dramatic retrial of Captain Dreyfus, while Algerian *colon* politicians were agitating in favor of abrogating the 1870 Cremieux Decree.[29] At the same time, *La Croix de l'Algérie's* Parisian parent organ, *La Croix*, was at the pinnacle of its circulation, and in May 1899, *La Croix de l'Algérie* claimed a total of over 5 million readers for the collected *Croix*. [30] Published by the Assumptionist

Fathers, whose schools had been suppressed by the 1881-1882 Ferry Laws, *La Croix* was the dominant voice of clericalism in the French press and a staunch opponent of republican *laïcité*. While *La Croix's* chief editor, Vincent de Paul Bailly, charted the broad contours of the paper's platforms, day-to-day decision-making was in the hands of the editors of *La Croix's* numerous local editions. According to Pierre Sorlin, it was these local editors who were most responsible for the paper's turn towards antisemitism. These editors exerted a radicalizing pressure on the journal from the peripheries of *La Croix's* circulation, particularly in Algeria and the north of France, where the presence of large Jewish populations enflamed local antisemitism.[31]

Founded in 1880 with the stated goal of combating the conspiratorial influence of Freemasonry and revitalizing Catholic France, *La Croix's* mixture of national and local news, co-opting of rural priests as distributors, and cutting-edge support for its employees made it a stunning journalistic success and the primary news source for many rural Frenchmen.[32] Furthermore, unlike local rivals such as the expressly antisemitic *L'Antijuif Algérien*, *La Croix de l'Algérie* was not a single-platform periodical, and appealed to its audience with a mixture of outspoken anti-Dreyfusardism, conservative pro-clerical social commentary, and attention to local agricultural issues. The paper's antisemitic expression was rather reactionary in its intensity, flaring up in response to particular events, such as the Cremieux vote and the Dreyfus retrial.[33] These factors gave the paper a wide resonance amongst the *colon* community, and sympathetic write-ins suggest that its readership was receptive to the sharp uptick in antisemitic commentary the paper exhibited in 1899.

In 1899, *La Croix de l'Algérie* was fairly consistent in the content of its semi-weekly publications. Published out of 86 Rue de Lyon, Mustapha-Algiers, the paper catered to an audience made up primarily of moderately well-off *colon* farmers. Coverage of major national news, such as the Dreyfus Affair, the murder trial of the Catholic lay teacher Frère Flamidien, and commentary on the Republican government was accompanied by regular reporting of local news, agricultural reports, and commentary on social values. International news sections regularly reported on events at the Vatican, while significant page space was devoted to direct attacks against Freemasonry and Jews. Indeed, it was

rare for an 1899 edition to be published without a front-page article directly attacking Jews or Freemasons, and the brief slogan “French: Never buy from the houses of Jews!” was often used as a space-filler if articles ran short.[34] By contrast, commentary on colonial policy or Algerian Muslim populations was infrequent, restricted primarily to brief news blurbs and reports on local financial policy. No spike in commentary on Muslim Algerians seems to have accompanied the paper’s increasing anti-Jewish fervor. Although most of the articles published in *La Croix de l'Algérie* were unsigned, a small clutch of authors provided regular articles under patriotic pseudonyms including “The Crusader,” “Martell,” and “Jules the African.” These pseudonyms attest to the self-consciousness with which the paper’s editors felt their Frenchness, situating their journalistic authority in the nexus of French, Catholic, and Algerian identity. The periodical’s successive editors, Jean Canizares and A. Planchet, did not generally pen articles under their own names, though it is likely some of the paper’s unsigned articles or pseudonyms belonged to them.

Writing in 1967, Pierre Sorlin, the primary historian on *La Croix*, characterized the paper’s antisemitism as confused, a manifestation of its Assumptionist editors’ fundamentally anti-modern ideology.

[35] However, close analysis of the 1899 reporting of *La Croix de l'Algérie* indicates that this paper’s antisemitism was rather ideologically coherent and creative, drawing upon a diverse array of antisemitic tropes, and not merely a hold-over of traditional Catholic anti-Judaism.

[36] This coherency is characterized by three central characteristics which indicate that the paper’s antisemitism functioned in an ideological, not merely instrumental fashion, and illustrate how the confluence of metropolitan policy and colonial anxieties stimulated Catholic colonial Algerian antisemitism. In its ideological function, the paper’s antisemitism mirrored Algeria’s local antisemitic movement which, Wilson writes, “was not a rational political option, or a movement conceived as a means to an end, but rather a movement that was an end in itself,” deriving from “a need to believe and belong.”[37] Though occasionally opportunistically instrumentalized, antisemitism structured the editors’ worldview as much as it was deployed by them in pursuit of practical local gains.

First, the paper's editors were guided by and articulated a worldview that reduced both the cause and effect of all France's ills to a single malign plot orchestrated by a triumvirate of those it characterized as France's most insidious enemies. This reductionist worldview is central to understanding *La Croix de l'Algérie* and the antisemitism of this period, as it provided both an explanation for the threatening changes taking place in French and Algerian society and, through calls to combat the sinister plotters, a plan of action to undo the damage. Accordingly, the paper portrayed its designated "enemies" as linked and overlapping, and echoed Parisian references to a subversive "interior Triple Alliance," the so-called "Syndicate of Treason" made up of Protestants, Jews, and Freemasons intent on undermining Catholic France.[38] While the paper represented Freemasons as the chief agents of subversion, it was the Jews, with their supposedly limitless capital and disproportionate governmental support, who were seen as the Masons' masters and enablers. This attitude was summarized by a February 1899 article which insisted that "[t]he greatest enemies of France are the Freemasons, who *la juiverie* put in motion." [39] Dreyfusard organizations were similarly characterized as a "conspiracy of leagues" organized "on behalf of the Jews" by Masons' liberal dispensation of "the gold of Israel." Meanwhile, claimed the editors, the Dreyfus Affair itself was "only a pretext, the exterior form of a gigantic conspiracy against the Catholic Church and against France....These two hatreds, the hatred of France and the hatred of the Church have come to rally around the flag of the Jew, who embodies the two." [40] Equating the Church and France as victims allowed the editors to articulate their resentment towards republican anticlericalism, attributing it to a conspiracy of un-French forces acting against the national interest.

Supposed Jewish financial power was an important theme for the paper, as it purported to explain how Jews had seized control of republican policy. One of the paper's central grievances was that Jews and Protestants received monetary support from the state disproportionate to their numbers and at the expense of Catholic Churches and primary schools.[41] This perceived injustice had resulted from the total subversion of the republican government, as expressed by a March 1899 article:

Nothing is going in a normal way, the country is dismantled, embroiled in occult influences which lead it in a way contrary to its wishes and interests....This tyrannical conspiracy existed long before the Dreyfus case, which revealed it....This pestilence is the influence of the Jews and the Protestants, who form the [leadership] of Freemasonry. This conspiracy includes all the men who have succeeded to power since the fall of the moral order....There is not a place of importance which is not [held by] a Protestant or a Jew.[42]

The “fall of the moral order” to which this piece refers was the founding of the Third Republic and its subsequent anticlerical legislation. This had dealt a severe blow to the Assumptionists by mandating lay education and extending it to girls, whose education to that point had largely been the purview of clerical institutions. As explicitly non-Catholic groups, Jews, Protestants, and Freemasons were seen as the chief architects of the anticlerical campaign, and not without cause: Jules Ferry himself was a Freemason. For *La Croix de l'Algérie*, conspiratorial financial and political influence became the only possible explanation for Assumptionist woes, allowing the editors to make sense of the events taking place around them.

The notion that the government of the Republic had been bought or subverted by anticlerical elements allowed the paper's editors to rationalize the perceived hostility of the state to French Catholicism. The government, they claimed, was actively protecting “the interests of the Jews and Freemasons it had been ordered to defend against those of the nation,” and the retrial of Dreyfus was frequently raised as an example of the subversion of the judiciary to Jewish interests.[43] Numerous articles insisted that the Parliament and the Council of State were made up primarily of Jews or Masons, asking rhetorically “Is this not monstrous?... [that] our interests are in the hands of our worst enemies.”[44] Other articles voiced anxiety that the Judeo-Masonic government would sell out the state to Germany, having supposedly already betrayed it in during the Franco-Prussian War. “One wonders with dread,” one author mused, “what would happen in case of war, with the Freemasons at our head and the Jews at our back!”[45] The paper's hostility toward the judiciary is unsurprising, as the French bar was home to many prominent French Jews and a stronghold of Dreyfusard sentiment. [46] Similarly, it was the republican government which had pushed the

naturalization of Algeria's Jews upon the *colon* community, threatening their local hegemony. These formulations cast Jews and Freemasons as the architects of the Third Republic and its anticlericalism, and illustrate how antisemitism was enflamed by revanchist currents in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War.

The belief that Jews controlled the French government was particularly troubling to the editors of *La Croix de l'Algérie* because they understood Jews to be inherently foreign. Jews, insisted the paper, were "a nation apart, having for a government the Sanhedrin," "a nomadic nation [and] the enemy of other nations."^[47] "The Jew remains everywhere the Jew," insisted an August edition, while other articles expressed enthusiasm at the notion of Jewish emigration, voluntary or otherwise, and wished early Zionist thinkers "Bon voyage!"^[48] The impulse to see Jews as foreigners likely connected to *colon* anxieties about their own Frenchness, which had only recently been enshrined in law. According to Alice Conklin, the extension of naturalization to colonial populations was predicated on those populations' "maturity" and "modern civilized behavior."^[49] The 1870 Cremieux Decree had implicitly recognized these qualities in Algeria's Jews, but not its Muslims. However, by waiting until 1889 to complete the naturalization of non-French Europeans in Algeria, the Republic implied that Algeria's Jews were more in line with republican notions of Frenchness than their Catholic neighbors. Resentment at this distinction and anxiety over its implications accordingly found expression in the antisemitic discourse of *La Croix de l'Algérie* and other local periodicals.

France's internal enemies also were perceived to be linked with her external rivals, especially England.^[50] Anglophobic articles appeared in flare ups, particularly in reaction to the Fashoda Incident and the opening of the Second Boer War.^[51] When it did appear, England was most frequently associated with the Protestant element of the conspiratorial triumvirate, and the pair were frequently depicted as two heads of the same monster; tellingly however, the English government was often represented as being in the pay or employ of the Jewish Syndicate, infiltrated in the same manner as France.^[52] All of France's enemies were thus joined together in the minds of the editors, and became all the more threatening for their unity.

The editors of *La Croix de l'Algérie* also believed that the central institutions of the “true France,” namely the army and the Roman Catholic Church, were under siege, threatened by scandal and legislation. Articulating anxiety over these matters was a rhetorical strategy whereby the *colon* editors positioned themselves within the French nation. This was the second major characteristic of the paper’s ideology, and it illustrates how the confluence of metropolitan events and colonial anxieties shaped the contours of colonial antisemitism. By discursively linking their interests with the central institutions of French conservatism these authors made a rhetorical bid for their own inclusion within the boundaries of French nationality. Paradoxically, however, by drawing exclusionary boundaries around the French nation, these authors participated in the same metropolitan anti-foreigner currents that had raised questions about their own Frenchness.[53]

According to the paper’s editors, the subverted government and the “Jewish high bank” were leading the true “France of the French, the France of Clovis, St. Louis, and Louis XIV...into the abyss,” leaving it “prostrate at the feet of Judas.”[54] The army and the Catholic Church were presented as the victims of a Jewish plot seeking vengeance over the Dreyfus Affair, as reported in an imagined conversation between a Jew and a French Catholic: “We,” intoned the fictional Jew, “are the masters of financial and industrial workings and the force of your ruination. And if this doesn’t work, we’ll lead you into a war...We will give you a civil war and a foreign war, and between the two,” he promised, France would be destroyed.[55] Anxiety over the Republic’s anticlerical legislation, meanwhile, led the editors to assert that the Church had become the victim of a “secular inquisition” aimed at undermining Catholic faith, a sharp contrast to the medieval Inquisition which, according to the paper, “at least was against the Jews and enemies of the homeland, and not against decent people.”[56] Furthermore, insisted the paper’s editors, it was the Jews who were to blame for the legislative campaign against the Church. “Who passed the law of divorce?” asked a February article, pointing to republican legislators: “A Jew, Naquet. Who threw the crucifix in a landfill? The Jew Herold. Who imagined a girls’ school? The Jew Camille.”[57] However, the editors’ insistence that Jews were behind the anticlerical campaign reflected a partial historical reality. Pierre Birnbaum has argued that assimilating republican Jews constituted a prominent “political class” in the Third Republic, characterized centrally

by their commitment to the separation of church and state.[58]Attacking Jewish legislators and magistrates became a way for clericalists to focus their anger and to indirectly critique the Third Republic without raising doubts about their own patriotism. French Jewish politicians like Alfred Naquet and Isaïe Levailant accordingly became targets of antisemitic vitriol.[59]

By the time of the Dreyfus Affair, sensitivity over the vulnerability of the Church had been cemented in ideological binaries which significantly precluded the possibility of Catholic wrongdoing, as illustrated by *La Croix de l'Algérie's* coverage of the 1899 Flamidien Affair. In February of that year Frère Flamidien, a lay Church teacher at a Catholic school in Lille, was arrested on suspicion of murdering a local child. While he was cleared of the charges in August, the Flamidien Affair produced significant anticlerical agitation, and in Flamidien *La Croix de l'Algérie* found their own Dreyfus. Through the spring and summer of 1899, articles insisting on Flamidien's innocence appeared as frequently as negative references to Dreyfus; indeed, the two were tellingly said to be "nothing alike." Flamidien quickly found a place in the editors' worldview as the "hapless victim of Masonic gossip and Jewish grudges!"[60] The "Masonic press," meanwhile, was accused of "worsening things" by vengefully lashing out at Flamidien, and *La Croix de l'Algérie* even hinted that Judeo-Masons might themselves have been behind the murder of which Flamidien was accused.[61]The editors were unwilling to even consider the possibility of Flamidien's guilt and interpreted the trial through a dualistic lens, contrasting a blameless and patriotic Church against subversive Dreyfusards. This attests to the primacy of such binaries in the minds of the editors, and the spike in antisemitic content the Flamidien Affair produced illustrates to the sensitivity of *colon* antisemitism to metropolitan affairs.

The conclusion of Dreyfus' retrial in the early fall of 1899 also produced a major uptick in antisemitic content, and the ambiguous nature of the trial's guilty verdict "with extenuating circumstances" left the editors convinced of Judeo-Masonic trickery. Articles with anti-Masonic and antisemitic messages appeared multiple times per issue for weeks at a time. Indeed, in their efforts to keep up a steady stream of antisemitic agitation, the editors found themselves not only re-reporting news from earlier that year in an antisemitic light, but publishing multiple articles

on a reported blood libel in Bohemia, asserting authoritatively that it was a well-known historical fact that Jews “assassinated...Christian infants, whose blood is used for criminal rites.”[62] Thus, not only did the editors of *La Croix de l'Algérie* perceive France to be the victim of an anticlerical conspiracy. This perception was reflected in the content of their pieces and in the editorial decisions regarding which topics to publish.

The conviction of *La Croix de l'Algérie*'s editors that they were active participants in a battle for the future of France was the third defining characteristic of the paper's worldview, and a belief that significantly dictated their actions and self-perceptions. For *colons* whose naturalization had only recently been confirmed in the legislation of 1889, participation in this “battle” became a performance of patriotism and an investment in the future of a France which would protect their interests. Agitating against Algerian Jews accordingly served the dual purpose of eliminating local rivals while promoting an idealized France in which Catholic *colons* were citizens and Algerian Jews and Muslims were not.

One aspect of this “One aspect of this ‘ ’s guilt, with malevolent Dreyfusards battle” was economic, and local interest appears to have played a motivating role in *La Croix de l'Algérie*'s repeated calls for an economic boycott of Jewish stores, a program it shared with *L'Antijuif Algérien* and other local antisemitic papers.[63] These campaigns were generally successful, and signs reading “Anti-Jewish establishment” or “Catholic establishment” became common in urban centers.[64] Wilson argues that economic rivalry played a significant role in Algerian antisemitism, particularly among low-income Spanish immigrants and middle-class urban business owners in competition with Algeria's sizable population of urban Jews. This was exacerbated by a boom in Algerian land sales in the early 1890s which, as contemporary economist Gustave de Molinari remarked, saw colonists from France “emigrate to Algeria with the idea of quickly making their fortunes” only to “find that the field [was] already occupied by Jewish traders and businessmen...”[65] Accounts of pillage during the January 1898 riots likewise suggest that economic self-interest was a motivating factor for *colon* antisemitism.[66]

La Croix de l'Algérie also agitated against Jews in the political arena. The Cremieux Decree had created enduring anxieties about the voting weight

of Algeria's Jews, and in 1899 *La Croix de l'Algérie* emerged as a strong supporter in the local campaign for their denaturalization. The lucrative salaries of Algerian political office also bred resentment among Algerian politicians who felt they were being kept from office by Jewish votes.

[67] In February, accordingly, the paper provided electoral advice regarding how best to thwart the plans of "*la juiverie*, masters of our finances." [68] Another article aimed to expose parliamentary candidates as Freemasons, claiming that two-thirds owed their loyalty to Masonic lodges. [69] Other pieces lamented the absence of successful Catholic political organizations, and readily overlooked differences with other Catholic factions, such as the *Ligue de la Patrie Française*, in order to present a unified front against the Syndicate. [70] For these editors, rallying Catholic forces was more important than factional differences among Catholic groups, as failure to unite would leave the Algerian antisemitic movement in the hands of Radicals, Socialists, and anticlericalists like Max Régis, who could not be trusted to protect the Church in the long term.

The editors saw their most important role, however, in combating the so-called "Dreyfusard" press in the contest over public political discourse. Gosnell has argued that the Algerian colonial press served as an "educational tool" both articulating and shaping local political consciousness by discursively defining the boundaries of national and local identity. [71] *La Croix de l'Algérie* participated in this process, striving to reify idealized national boundaries while contesting the inclusionary ideology of its journalistic rivals. Accordingly, the paper devoted significant page-space to challenging and belittling its journalistic opponents, those "hacks of the Lodges" and "day-journalists who receive Jew-money for barking at the cassock." [72] By targeting the Dreyfusard press and striving to undermine the Algerian Jewish community, the editors saw themselves as playing a vital role in defending both their national and local interests. Yet while local and metropolitan factors combined to structure the editors' worldview, it would be a mistake to view the paper's antisemitism as an instrument of political expediency. Antisemitism was rather the glue which held the Assumptionists' worldview together, and neither the content of their reporting nor their editorial decisions can be understood without a full appreciation of the seriousness with which these journalists viewed the battle between "the two Frances." [73]

Antisemitism, Racism, and Modernity in *La Croix de l'Algérie*

While Pierre Sorlin and D.L.L. Parry have characterized *La Croix* and its antisemitism as fundamentally anti-modern, *La Croix de l'Algérie's* social commentary and synthesis of diverse antisemitic tropes reveal this to be an over-simplification.^[74] The paper did express hostility to industrial modernity; however, these expressions were often tied to its antisemitic ideology or the particularities of the Algerian colony. In some cases this connection is subtle. One article juxtaposed urbanization with an anticipated decline in population and traditional family structures. "Today," claimed the article, "the factory has killed the family and dispersed its members, emigration from the countryside to the city bleaches the race...[and] the land is no longer our great friend."^[75] Here, urbanization and industrialization were depicted a threat to a "genuine" France, understood to be rural, traditional, and Catholic. In contrast to this agrarian ideal, Algeria's socially mobile and largely urbanized Jewish population would have been a troubling outlier, particularly in light of the demographic and electoral "crisis" caused by their 1870 naturalization.

At other moments the paper's anti-modernism and antisemitism tellingly merged. One article claimed that "[t]he day [will come] when all of France will belong to the Jews, [when] we will not see any more fields of wheat or meadows or any of that which is rich and makes us happy."^[76] Here the Jews were figured as literally undoing the agrarian landscape of France. Such fears reflected the very real anxieties of *colon* agrarians, particularly in the wine-producing sector. In the early 1890s, many of these wine producers had become indebted, generating a current of resentment towards their creditors, who were often Jewish. The antisemitic trope of "Jewish usury" enflamed these sentiments, and was echoed in the pages of *La Croix de l'Algérie*.^[77] Situating these articles in their Algerian context accordingly indicates the insufficiency of anti-modernity as an interpretative lens for *La Croix de l'Algérie*.

Comparison of the Parisian *La Croix* and *La Croix de l'Algérie* sheds additional light on the interrelation of metropolitan and colonial antisemitic currents. These two papers deployed a range of similar if diverse antisemitic tropes to communicate their anti-Jewish messages, with the Algerian edition embellishing upon the antisemitic currents of the metropole while adapting them to local needs. Articles from both

papers exhibited rhetoric from the repertoire of Christian religious judeophobia, and frequently associated Jews with individuals and groups perceived negatively in Catholic theology, including Pharisees, Cain, and Judas.[78] The trope of the “wandering Jew” also made appearances, particularly in *La Croix*'s weekly illustrated edition. This trope, particularly well known amongst France's rural peasantry, implied Jewish homelessness and foreignness, and was thus particularly conducive to *colon* efforts to brand Jews as foreigners. Medieval tropes such as blood libel also made their appearances, although rarely and only in a reactionary fashion, as they did during the conclusion of the Dreyfus retrial.[79] These judeophobic tropes formed the backbone of an antisemitic vocabulary shared by the Algerian and metropolitan *La Croix*, which built upon long-standing assumptions about Jews that had their roots in Catholic theological teachings.[80] This was not a wholesale transplant of traditional Christian antisemitism, however. Major judeophobic tropes, such as Jewish deicide and fealty to the devil appeared only rarely. Common medieval tropes, such as Jewish bestiality (in both connotations) and well poisoning were also absent, although arguably the latter was reinterpreted to depict Jews as poisoning the state. Critically, the Assumptionists also departed from Church doctrine encouraging the conversion of the Jews. Rather, *La Croix* and its subsidiaries rationalized their desire for Jewish exclusion as the will of God, thereby justifying their prejudices.[81] These divergences indicate that the antisemitism of *La Croix de l'Algérie* was more than a relic of early modern Judeophobia.

Modern antisemitic tropes also appeared in newspaper coverage, calling into doubt the possibility that the paper was simply a reflection of traditional religious anti-Judaism. *La Croix* demonstrated a strong and consistent interest in the supposed power of Jewish finance, which they perceived as both “the greatest power in the world” and a subversion of the value of land.[82] *La Croix de l'Algérie* similarly depicted capital as the dominant weapon in the Judeo-Masonic arsenal, used to bribe government officials, fund Dreyfusard electoral campaigns, and maintain the Dreyfusard press. The Algerian and metropolitan editions diverged, however, in their treatment of Jewish usury. Whereas this trope was noticeably underutilized by the Parisian *La Croix*, it did appear in publications by *La Croix de l'Algérie*. [83] This disjuncture likely stems from the sense of economic rivalry stimulated by the presence of a large

Jewish community in Algeria's urban centers, where patrons of Jewish businesses were subjected to social ostracism and occasionally assaulted. [84]

Modern racial tropes also made occasional appearances, although these were rare and a far cry from the overt and consistent racial antisemitism of *L'Antijuif Algérien*. An August article from *La Croix de l'Algérie* dabbled in racial antisemitism when it praised the virtue of French women who, "Christian and Aryan...feel for the Israelite an instinctive repulsion. Under their caressing manners, she smells the reptile." [85] These references to instinctive repulsion and the sub-human character of Jews reveals a current of racial essentialism within *La Croix de l'Algérie's* antisemitic repertoire, while references to Aryanism are likely attempts to draw upon and repeat antisemitic rhetoric the editors had encountered elsewhere and only partially internalized. However, Sorlin has contended that *La Croix* was largely aloof from racial antisemitic currents, and the general absence from *La Croix de l'Algérie's* publications of the most common racial slurs (e.g. *youpins*, *youtres*) or overt racial theory seems to support this. [86] By contrast, the term "race" appears much more frequently, often several times a month, and reprints of mainland articles with titles like "Race against Race" would have helped acclimatize *La Croix's* wide readership with an outwardly racial rhetoric. [87] The recycling and reproduction of this vocabulary highlights *La Croix de l'Algérie's* role as a vehicle for the dissemination of the voices and ideas of metropolitan antisemitism to rural and colonial audiences. Its clumsy application, however, suggests that issues of race were secondary to religious difference and foreignness for the editors of *La Croix de l'Algérie*. This can be explained by reference to the context of colonial Algeria, where Spanish, Italian, and Maltese Catholics had attempted to claim naturalization on the basis of a shared Latinity that excluded Jews and Muslims. [88]

The antisemitism deployed by *La Croix de l'Algérie* was multifaceted, not limited to racial, economic, or religious content, and efforts by the editors to prove the malign nature of Jews reveals an ability to creatively reconfigure disparate themes into a coherent whole. For example, an article from September 1899 purported to recount how Jewish treachery undermined Christian defenders during the medieval siege of Rhodes in an effort to illustrate the continuity of Jewish malignity in a striking

synthesis of national, religious, and racial antisemitism. The Rhodes episode, the article claimed, demonstrated “that the genius of treason has always been hereditary to the house of the Jews,” by relating how a local Jewish doctor purportedly betrayed defending Christian knights to the invading Turks. Jews were inevitably instrumental in the downfall of Christian society, the paper continued, noting that, “[i]n the late hours of societies, of nations, you always encounter the Jew, the Jew which just sits in the national home where it intends...to suffer no other law than his Talmud....The Jew remains everywhere the Jew. The hermit always accomplishes his fatal mission, at the cost of races and nations.” The downfall of these societies, the paper implied, was rooted in their negligence of “eternal principles” warning against the integration of Jews, and in a direct parallel to “the present hour” the editors warned that France herself would be the Jews’ next victim.[89]

In these passages the editors synthesized pseudo-racial essentialism with older notions of Jewish separatism and early modern hostility to a Jewish “state within a state,” in this case by making reference to the primacy of Talmud law.[90] A firm belief in the power of conspiratorial forces and a dualistic worldview allowed the editors of *La Croix de l'Algérie* to coalesce such otherwise disparate antisemitic tropes into a generally coherent and consistently-articulated message: that the “true France” was under siege, the victim of conspiratorial forces mustered by the enemies of Church and nation alike, the Jews. Yet despite this apparent flexibility, *La Croix de l'Algérie* did not deploy every antisemitic trope at its disposal. This suggests that antisemitism had more than an instrumental role in the minds of the editors; some tropes fit into their worldview, while others did not. While concrete local gain played a stimulating role, the ideological function of the paper’s antisemitism as an explanatory worldview was at least as important.

These conclusions are significant because they allow us to integrate the seemingly confused antisemitism of the Assumptionists into wider discussions of the history of antisemitism. The study of antisemitism is often divided into subtypes: religious anti-Judaism (oriented around doctrine and superstition), early-modern antisemitism (often based on political, social, or economic factors, and enduring or reconfigured religious tropes), and modern antisemitism (largely characterized as nationalist, racist, and essentialist). While these subtypes do not have

fixed geographic or chronological boundaries, a firm division is often suggested between early modern and modern antisemitism, particularly by scholars seeking to define the origins of the racial antisemitism that figured so centrally in the twentieth century.[91] The antisemitism of *La Croix* has been most frequently situated on the early modern side of this division, given the anti-Republican and conservative character of the Assumptionists and their predominantly rural, unindustrialized audience.[92]

Rather than an outdated holdover, however, this antisemitism inhabited an important transitional moment in the development of modern antisemitism. With its synthesis and reconfiguration of religious, early-modern, and modern antisemitic tropes, *La Croix de l'Algérie* demonstrates that the divide between early-modern and modern antisemitisms was neither concrete, nor an either/or binary. The paper straddled this division, experimenting tentatively with racial and nationalistic rhetoric while disregarding some of the most enduring themes of Christian religious antisemitism. Antisemitic tropes were reconfigured to fit the paper's worldview as needed. Furthermore, as a major source of news and opinion to France's rural population, the paper also served as a transitional vehicle helping to introduce and normalize new antisemitic configurations to the widest subset of the French population.

The distinct character of colonial Algerian antisemitism is further illuminated by its juxtaposition with colonial racism. Rather than reflecting a shared racist vocabulary or ideology, comparison of *La Croix de l'Algérie's* antisemitism and limited expressions of colonial racism illustrates the coexistence of two separate and distinct racisms which deployed divergent tropes and expressive forms. The paper's commentary on indigenous Algerians is conspicuously sparse, indicating if anything a process of erasure that is a sharp contrast to the editors' preoccupation with Jews. While antisemitic content appeared on the front page of nearly every edition, content on *arabes* and *indigenes* did so only rarely, appearing instead in third and fourth-page regional news blurbs that matter-of-factly reported accidents, impending festivals, or episodes of violence.[93] Most of these items appear detached or sympathetic: a May 1899 report characterized the accidental deaths of a pair of indigenous workers "a terrible accident," while an August report,

“Innocents Condemned,” called for the immediate release of a pair of wrongfully-imprisoned Arabs.[94] Such reports were a stark departure from the paper’s overt antisemitism. Tellingly, however, references to Jews appeared to refer exclusively to European or *colon* Jews, and the erasure of Algeria’s indigenous population of Mozabite Jews mirrors that of Muslims in the paper’s reporting. Algerian Muslims, whom the state had deemed only partially compatible with its civilizing mission, and who accordingly lacked political participation, were likely seen as less threatening than Algeria’s Jews, and therefore merited less attention. [95] Indeed, indigenous Jews were at times lumped into perceptions of the larger Muslim population: as former Oran prefect Charles du Bouzet wrote in 1871, “Indigenous Israelites are not Frenchmen, but Arabs of the Jewish faith.”[96]

The paper’s few direct commentaries on indigenous Algerians at times included the paternalistic vocabulary of the civilizing mission, though even these mentions were rare and understated, and reflected the tensions provoked by the largely anticlerical civilizing project.[97] Some articles reflected paternalistic impulses to alter indigenous behavior, invoking the responsibility of “the superior race” to combat alcoholism and the veiling of women, and to educate Algerian Muslims in agricultural techniques.[98] Yet while the editors of *La Croix de l’Algérie* appeared willing to support the “improvement” of Muslim Algerians in a limited fashion, such routes remained utterly closed to Jews. Similarly, unlike Protestants and Masons, Muslims were never ranked among the forces working against the “true France,” except insofar as they might serve as gullible pawns for the English colonial empire. Indeed, attitudes towards Muslims and Jews appear to be largely disconnected. The most striking articulation of this separation appeared in a January reprint from *La Croisade Francaise*, which co-opted the local Muslim population into its antisemitic campaign. This piece called for the construction of a “French” establishment where Muslim and French merchants would trade together to the exclusion of Jews.[99] The apparent willingness of *colon* antisemites to include Algerian Muslims in their cause reveals the degree to which attitudes towards these two populations were ideologically separated at peak of the Dreyfus Affair.

Conclusions

The antisemitism of *La Croix de l'Algérie*, which represented one current of colonial Algerian antisemitism, performed both a practical and an ideological role. While antisemitism was a convenient platform from which to boycott economic rivals and mobilize the local electorate, it also helped colonists to make sense of the world during a period of profound French political and social instability. This ideological function was part of a larger trend gripping the French metropole. Indeed, D.L.L. Parry has suggested that conspiracy theories were both endemic and epidemic during the Third Republic, reflecting a genuinely high level of “actual intrigue,” governmental instability, and dualism in which conspiracy theories were part of a larger “debate about the identity of France” that pitted “one set of values against another.”^[100] Conspiracy theories served their adherents by “[making] sense of the world conceptually, explaining the significance of confusing events by identifying those deemed responsible for them.”^[101] Dreyfusard and anti-Dreyfusard divisions were but one among many such conspiratorial worldviews: whereas Assumptionists feared an anticlerical Syndicate, some republicans perceived a clerical conspiracy led by the Jesuits. Radicals, Bonapartists, and Monarchists also constructed dualistic visions of French identity.^[102] The *colon* audience of *La Croix de l'Algérie* produced similar binaries, positing their French colonial identity in direct contrast to the supposedly unpatriotic Jews, whom they blamed for national and local grievances. Juxtaposing this case study of colonial Algeria with the conspiratorial dualism present in metropolitan France reveals that the worldview and antisemitism of *La Croix de l'Algérie* was a local manifestation of a much larger trend.

Analyzing the journalistic antisemitism of *La Croix de l'Algérie et de la Tunisie* also shows that, at least for some contemporary Dreyfus-era journalists, the division between the “two Frances” was real and self-evident. This perception dictated the editorial and journalistic decisions of the paper’s editors, whose antisemitic commentary peaked in response to the Cremieux vote, the Flamidien Affair, and the Dreyfus retrial, which they understood as battlegrounds in a larger struggle against a conspiracy of unpatriotic anticlerical forces. This position makes particular sense in light of Algeria’s socio-economic and political climate in the 1890s. Although Algerians shared, to a certain extent, an antisemitic worldview with metropolitans, local factors powerfully shaped the distinct character of Algerian *colon* antisemitism. Indeed,

provincial economic and political rivalry and *colon* anxiety about their political and national status enflamed and structured antisemitic sentiment in Algeria. *La Croix de l'Algérie's* antisemitism also reflected the distinctive conspiratorial worldview of its editors and metropolitan editions, and was a synthetic amalgam of religious, early-modern, and modern antisemitic tropes ideologically distinct from anti-Muslim racism.

Understanding that turn-of-the-century antisemitism was complicated, nuanced, and derived from a variety of local and metropolitan strains of antisemitic thought in turn challenges predominant binary interpretations of the development of antisemitism. Indeed, it is only by assessing the degree to which Algeria and other French peripheral populations were entangled with and separated from the currents of the mainland that we can complete the story of the Dreyfus Affair.

[1] See Frederick Brown, *For the Soul of France: Culture Wars in the Age of Dreyfus* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010).

[2] Stephen Wilson, *Ideology and Experience: Antisemitism in France at the Time of the Dreyfus Affair* (East Brunswick: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1982), 119.

[3] On the debate surrounding the terms “antisemitism” and “anti-Semitism,” see David Gerber, “Anti-Semitism and Jewish-Gentile Relations in American Historiography and the American Past,” in *Anti-Semitism in American History*, ed. David Gerber (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 38-39. The use here of “antisemitism” stresses the term’s specific anti-Jewish character and attempts to distance the study of anti-Jewish prejudice from the racial connotations of the term “anti-Semitism.”

[4] George Fredrickson, *Racism: A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 12, 19, 46, 64.

[5] According to Joshua Schreier, Algerian Jews were seen as a population that could be assimilated into French society as it was defined by ruling French republicans. Algerian Muslims, by contrast, were not, due in large part to their domestic and marital practices, and were restricted to subject status during the Dreyfus Affair. As Jonathan Gosnell has noted, however, while “legislators considered Algerian Jews to be an assimilable

population...this view was not always shared in colonial Algerian society.” Jonathan K Gosnell, *The Politics of Frenchness in Colonial Algeria, 1930-1954* (Rochester: The University of Rochester Press, 2002), 24; Joshua Schreier, *Arabs of the Jewish Faith: The Civilizing Mission in Colonial Algeria* (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 2010), 1-8, 22, 171.

[6] Fredrickson, 75.

[7] Alice Conklin, Sarah Fishman, and Robert Zaretsky, *France and its Empire Since 1870* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 102.

[8] Wilson, *Ideology and Experience*, esp. chapter 3.

[9] Conklin, *France and its Empire Since 1870*, 62-65.

[10] On the antinomy of republican universalism and racial thinking in France in the Third Republic, see Gary Wilder, *The French Imperial Nation-State: Negritude and Colonial Humanism between the Two World Wars* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 3-18.

[11] On the Dreyfus Affair, see Jean-Denis Bredin, *The Affair: The Case of Alfred Dreyfus* (New York: George Braziller, 1986); Frederick Brown, *For the Soul of France: Culture Wars in the Age of Dreyfus* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010); Michael Burns, *France and the Dreyfus Affair: A Documentary History* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 1999); Ruth Harris, *Dreyfus: Politics, Emotion, and the Scandal of the Century* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2010); Paula Hyman, “The Dreyfus Affair: The Visual and the Historical,” *Journal of Modern History* 61, (March 1989); and Stephen Wilson, *Ideology and Experience: Antisemitism in France at the Time of the Dreyfus Affair* (East Brunswick: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1982). Brown recapitulates the traditional interpretation of the Dreyfus era as a civil war between extensive camps supporting rival visions of the Third Republic. Harris, Wilson, Burns, and Hyman have variably challenged this view, suggesting that the Dreyfus Affair did not in fact resonate deeply with the majority of the French population, especially those outside its urban centers.

[12] On French antisemitism in the Dreyfus-era, see Pierre Birnbaum, *The Anti-Semitic Moment; A Tour of France in 1898*, trans. Jean Marie Todd, (New York, Hill and Wang, 2003, originally published in 1998); Michael Burns, *Rural Society and French Politics; Boulangism*

and the Dreyfus Affair, 1886-1900 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); Robert Byrnes, *Antisemitism in Modern France Volume 1: The Prologue to the Dreyfus Affair* (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1950); Nancy Fitch, "Mass Culture, Mass Parliamentary Politics, and Modern Anti-Semitism: The Dreyfus Affair in Rural France," *The American Historical Review* 97 (1992): 55-95; Albert S. Lindemann, *The Jew Accused; Three Anti-Semitic Affairs (Dreyfus, Beilis, Frank), 1894-1915* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991); Pierre Pierrard, *Juifs et Catholiques Français: D'Édouard Drumont à Jacob Kaplan (1886-1994)* (Paris: Cerf, 1997, originally published in 1970); and Wilson, *Ideology and Experience*.

[13] Pierrard, *Juifs et Catholiques Français*, 22, 28, 33-36, 51, 81-84, 92, 100-102; Byrnes, *Antisemitism in Modern France*, 67, 87, 128-129, 179, 203; Wilson, *Ideology and Experience*, xiv-xvii, 5-8, 48, 64, 73, 636; Burns, *Rural Society and French Politics*, 5-7, 160-166, 172.

[14] Birnbaum, *The Anti-Semitic Moment*, 6, 75, 83-87, 90, 111, 332-333, 342, 355.

[15] While Wilson's treatment of Algerian antisemitism is the most thorough of the relevant scholarly works, his interpretation of its antisemitic currents is largely one-sided, focusing primarily on the racial anticlerical socialist aspects of the antisemitic movement and its leaders, including Max Régis, Jean Morinaud, and the Marquis de Mores.

[16] On French colonial racism and the "civilizing mission," see Alice Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea and Empire in France and West Africa, 1895-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997). See also J. P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided; Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006); and Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization; The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

[17] Conklin argues that the language and policies associated with France's civilizing mission were racist formulations enabling the contradictory expansion of colonial empire alongside self-professions of republican democracy. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize*, 253. Wilder has disputed Conklin's interpretation, arguing that viewing France as an "imperial nation-state" exposes the reciprocal influence of colony and

metropole upon one another that made universalism and colonial racism antinomies rather than a contradiction in republican ideals. Wilder, *The French Imperial Nation-State*, 3-5.

[18] Elizabeth Zack, "French and Algerian Identity Formation in 1890s Algiers," *French Colonial History* 2 (2002): 117.

[19] Gosnell, *The Politics of Frenchness in Colonial Algeria*, 24, 74.

[20] Byrnes, *Antisemitism in Modern France*, 271. On Drumont, see also Frederick Busi, *The Pope of Antisemitism: The Career and Legacy of Édouard-Adolphe Drumont* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1986).

[21] Wilson, *Ideology and Experience*, 230.

[22] Gosnell, *The Politics of Frenchness in Colonial Algeria*, 8-9.

[23] Gosnell has interestingly noted, however, that many *colons* of non-French origin were slow to accept naturalization, retaining distinct identities into the twentieth century. *Ibid.*, 22-24.

[24] The population of French nationals in 1896 was approximately 578,000. Charles-Robert Ageron, *Modern Algeria: A History from 1830 to the Present*, trans. Michael Brett (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1991, originally published 1964), 63. Schreier, *Arabs of the Jewish Faith*, 8; Wilson, *Ideology and Experience*, 231.

[25] Gosnell, *The Politics of Frenchness in Colonial Algeria*, 23-24.

[26] Wilson, *Ideology and Experience*, 230.

[27] *Ibid.*,. 107, 119.

[28] Ageron, *Modern Algeria*, 63.

[29] Harris, *Dreyfus: Politics, Emotion, and the Scandal of the Century*, 218.

[30] By 1896, the Parisian *La Croix* had a circulation of over 172,000, and was further supplemented by an additional seventy-three local semi-weeklies, seven bi-weeklies, and six daily additions. The paper's rural affiliates also served as an outlet for reprinting articles and statements by

leading anti-Dreyfusards and antisemites across France. *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Explications nécessaires," May 21, 1899; Pierre Sorlin, *La Croix et Les Juifs (1880-1899); Contribution a l'Histoire de l'Antisemitisme Contemporain* (Paris, Editions Bernard Grasset, 1967), 40-44, 170; Byrnes, *Antisemitism in Modern France*, 194; Wilson, *Ideology and Experience*, 519; and Stephen Wilson, "Catholic Populism in France at the time of the Dreyfus Affair: The *Union Nationale*," *Journal of Contemporary History* 10 (1975): 689, 694.

[31] Sorlin, *La Croix et Les Juifs*, 209-213.

[32] *Ibid.*, 44, 107; Byrnes, *Antisemitism in Modern France*, 194-195; Burns, *Rural Society and French Politics*, 93.

[33] Sorlin, *La Croix et Les Juifs*, 88, 106, 112, 120, 123; Wilson, *Ideology and Experience*, 533.

[34] *La Croix de l'Algérie*, January 26, 1899.

[35] Sorlin, *La Croix et Les Juifs*, 57-60, 75, 159-162, 183, 216. Racial language, for example, and the most vulgar pejorative terms for Jews, such as "Youtres" and "Youpins," appeared rarely in *La Croix* and most frequently in quotations or reprints of articles published elsewhere. The paper's preferred term for Jews is the moderately pejorative "Juif," although the more neutral "Israelite" appeared occasionally.

[36] While the tropes of religious anti-Judaism and antisemitism were often the same, religious anti-Judaism allowed one to escape the stigmatization of Jewishness through conversion. Antisemitism, by contrast, precluded this possibility.

[37] Wilson, *Ideology and Experience*, 201.

[38] *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "La Croisade," January 29, 1899; *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Qu'on En Finisse!," May 14, 1899.

[39] "Juiverie" is a complicated term best translated as "Jewry." However, it has a particularly negative connotation ascribing a semi-conspiratorial collectivity and cultural infiltration most associated at this time with Jewish immigrants of Eastern European origin. *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "La Franc-Maconnerie et nos Colonies," February 16, 1899; *La Croix de l'Algérie*, March 30, 1899; *La Croix de l'Algérie*, April 2, 1899.

[40] *Croix de l'Algérie*, "La Franc-Maçonnerie et nos Colonies," February 16, 1899; *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Sentinelles, prenez garde a vous," January 5, 1899; *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "La Franc-Maçonnerie traître a la France," July 27, 1899.

[41] *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "La République des juifs," January 22, 1899; *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Budget Des Cultes," February 11, 1899.

[42] *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "La Ligue Occulte," March 9, 1899.

[43] *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Gachis Parlementaire," January 8, 1899; *La Croix de l'Algérie*, January 12, 1899.

[44] *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "La Justice," September 3, 1899; *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Conseil D'Etat," March 26, 1899.

[45] *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Trahison Maconnique," June 18, 1899.

[46] See Pierre Birnbaum, *The Jews of the Republic: A Political History of State Jews in France from Gambetta to Vichy*, trans. Jean Marie Todd (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

[47] *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "L'Action Providentielle," February 2, 1899; *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Vie Ou Mort," February 19, 1899; *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "L'Etat Actuel De La France," June 4, 1899.

[48] *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Une Page D'Histoire," August 17, 1899; *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Bon Voyage," March 16, 1899.

[49] Conklin, *France and its Empire Since 1870*, 90.

[50] *La Croix de l'Algérie*, January 26, 1899.

[51] *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Le Peril Protestant," January 8, 1899; *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Dans Le Sud Africain," November 2, 1899.

[52] *La Croix de l'Algérie*, January 8, 1899; *La Croix de l'Algérie*, February 26, 1899; *La Croix de l'Algérie*, November 2, 1899.

[53] Gosnell, *The Politics of Frenchness in Colonial Algeria*, 15.

[54] *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "L'Annee 1899," January 15, 1899.

[55] *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Le fin mot de l'histoire," January 29, 1899.

[56] *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "L'inquisition Laïque au XIX^e Siecle," March 2, 1899. *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Leur Logique," November 19, 1899.

[57] The Panama Scandal was also attributed to Jews. *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Nos Bons Juifs," February 23, 1899.

[58] Birnbaum, *The Jews of the Republic*. See especially chapters 8,9, and 18.

[59] Indeed, Levaillant was fired from his civic post as a result of anti-Dreyfusard pressure. Birnbaum, *The Jews of the Republic*, 307.

[60] Harris and D.L.L. Parry have both usefully noted that conspiratorial worldviews were held on both sides of the Dreyfusard/anti-Dreyfusard split, making the attitudes of *La Croix de l'Algérie* part of a wider societal trend. D.L.L. Parry, "Articulating the Third Republic by Conspiracy Theory," *European History Quarterly* 28 (1998): 163-88; *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Un Acte," April 6, 1899; *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Dreyfus Et Flamidien," April 16, 1899.

[61] *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Un Aveu Du 'Radical,'" March 2, 1899.

[62] *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "En Boheme," December 7, 1899. *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Un meurtre rituel en Boheme," September 24, 1899; *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Ah! Les Pauvres," September 17, 1899.

[63] *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "L'Armee et la Franc-Maconnerie," January 1, 1899; *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Les Galeries Nationales d'Alger," February 11, 1899.

[64] Cited in Wilson, *Ideology and Experience*, 232.

[65] *Ibid.*

[66] Conklin, *France and its Empire Since 1870*, 105; Wilson, *Ideology and Experience*, 119-120.

[67] *Ibid.*, 230-31.

[68] *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Le Syndicat des Contribuables," February 8, 1899.

[69] *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Des Francs-Maçons, Il N'en Faut Plus!," August 17, 1899.

[70] The paper also frequently reprinted articles by the Abbe Farge. *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "L'Egalite Devant La Loi," June 11, 1899.

[71] Gosnell is building on the work of Benedict Anderson on the role of print media in national identity creation. Gosnell, *The Politics of Frenchness in Colonial Algeria*, 73-74.

[72] Specific "Dreyfusard" journals, both Algerian and metropolitan, such as *Le Figaro*, *Le Telegramme*, and *La Vigie*, were frequent subjects of ridicule and refutation. Rival periodicals' readerships were also derided as "hysterical women" and "panamisards." *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Deux Larrons," April 16, 1899; *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Ohe! *Le Telegramme*!," December 10, 1899; *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Reponse A La '*Vigie*,'" August 24, 1899; *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Les Concasseries de La '*Vigie*,'" September 14, 1899.

[73] *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "L'Etat Actuel De La France," June 4, 1899; *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Faire Son Georges!," December 3, 1899; *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "La Bonne Presse en Algérie," April 10, 1899.

[74] Sorlin, *La Croix et Les Juifs*, 57-60, 75, 159-162, 183, 216; Parry, "Articulating the Third Republic by Conspiracy Theory," 170.

[75] *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Sans Enfants," April 10, 1899.

[76] Perhaps importantly, this article was a reprint of one first published by the Parisian *La Croix*. Nonetheless, its alarmist and agrarian themes are broadly in line with those of the Algerian edition. *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Chronique Parisienne," July 9, 1899; *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "L'Etat Actuel De La France," June 4, 1899.

[77] Wilson, *Ideology and Experience*, 232; Sorlin, *La Croix et Les Juifs*, 115.

[78] The term "judeophobia" refers to anti-Jewish tropes that are rooted primarily on theological premises. On this term, see Walter Laqueur, *The Changing Face of Antisemitism: from Ancient Times to the Present Day* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[79] *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "En Boheme," December 7, 1899; *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Un meurtre rituel en Boheme," September 24, 1899.

[80] See especially Wilson, *Ideology and Experience*, chapter 14.

[81] Sorlin, *La Croix et Les Juifs*, 137.

[82] Parry, "Articulating the Third Republic by Conspiracy Theory," 170.

[83] *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Les soutiens du Syndicat de Trahison," August 31, 1899; *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Faire Son Georges!," December 3, 1899.

[84] Wilson, *Ideology and Experience*, 232.

[85] *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "La femme française et l'antisemitisme," August 31, 1899.

[86] Sorlin, *La Croix et Les Juifs*, 153.

[87] *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Race Contre Race," originally published by M. Quesnny de Beaurepaire, July 16, 1899.

[88] Wilson, *Ideology and Experience*, 232.

[89] *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Une Page D'Histoire," August 17, 1899.

[90] The notion of a Jewish "state within the state" is rooted in medieval and early modern legal conditions whereby Jews were often the direct subjects of rulers, and were often allowed corporate self-governance. Distrust of Jewish corporatism in France reached its height in debates on the extension of citizenship to French Jews following the French Revolution, and Jews were ultimately made to renounce their corporate identity. Doubts lingered however, and Napoleon Bonaparte's Grand Sanhedrin of 1806 called upon Jewish leaders to explicitly declare their loyalty to the state, rather than Jewish law, leaders, or custom.

[91] The distinction is also sometimes described as a divide between largely religious "anti-Judaism" and racial "antisemitism." See Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism, 1700-1933* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), who situates the 1870s as a crucial turning point.

[92] Sorlin offers this interpretation, and characterizes the paper's antisemitism as an outdated holdover of Christian and early modern antisemitic elements reflecting its underlying anti-modern orientation. D.L.L Parry adopts a similar position. Sorlin, *La Croix et Les Juifs*, 57-60, 75-77, 159-162, 183, 190, 216; Parry, "Articulating the Third Republic by Conspiracy Theory," 170; While some *La Croix* audiences were urban and modernizing, such as that of Paris, the bulk of the paper's readership were rural peasants.

[93] Reports of violence included those incidents that might be considered "anti-colonial," as well as the merely "criminal," though nearly all such reports shared a striking brevity and offer little to no commentary or explanation. Furthermore, as the periodical's printings were usually four pages, the position of such reports reflected their unimportance to the editors.

[94] *La Croix de l'Algérie*, May 4, 1899; *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Innocents Condamnes," August 27, 1899; *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "L'Exode Des Musulmans," November 16, 1899.

[95] Schreier, *Arabs of the Jewish Faith*, 2-4.

[96] Quoted in Schreier, *Arabs of the Jewish Faith*, 8.

[97] On the whole, *La Croix de l'Algérie* seemed largely unattached to notions of the civilizing mission. J.P. Daughton's discussion of the tension between republican colonial policy and French missionaries may be instructive here. According to Daughton, the civilizing mission as expressed through the Third Republic's colonial policy was broadly anticlerical in character and, with the particular exception of the Madagascar colony, negatively disposed towards independent French missionary efforts, which some policy makers perceived to be creating a clerical redoubt in the French empire. The particular republican and anticlerical connotations of the civilizing mission may thus account for the relative infrequency of its appearance in the anti-republican Assumptionist paper. Daughton, *An Empire Divided*, 5-21.

[98] *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Soeur Louise," May 21, 1899; *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "Le Regime Des Spiritueux en Afrique," June 25, 1899; *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "L'Enseignement Agricole; Des Indigenes," June 4, 1899.

[99] *La Croix de l'Algérie*, "La Croisade," January 29, 1899.

[100] As Parry notes, "Paul Déroulède and Eugène Deloncle *did* conspire to overthrow the Republic in 1899 and 1937 respectively." Parry, "Articulating the Third Republic by Conspiracy Theory," 165-166, 177-178.

[101] *Ibid.*, 184.

[102] *Ibid.*, 167-170, 180-181.



Published by

 [View all posts by](#)

Articles

19th century, Algeria, Empire, France, Race, Religion

COMMENTS ARE CLOSED.

FIND US ON:

» [Facebook](#)

» [Twitter](#)

ADMIN:

» [Log in](#)

» [WordPress.org](#)

PROUDLY POWERED BY WORDPRESS | **THEME: BASKERVILLE 2 BY ANDERS NOREN.**

UP ↑