

Beyond Postcolonial Critique: Theoretical and Political Alliances between Hindutva and Zionism

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The recent book *Unacknowledged Kinships: Postcolonial Studies and the Historiography of Zionism* published in 2023 closes with a conversation between the professor of Jewish Studies, Stefan Vogt, and the Indian historian and scholar of postcolonial theory, Dipesh Chakrabarty. The dialogue, which queries how amenable Jewish history is to postcolonial studies as well as considers similarities between Indian anti-/postcolonial nationalism and the history of Zionism and Israel, reflects key developments this roundtable seeks to address. These include: widening conversations about the contemporary state and boundaries of postcolonial theory; and a seemingly emergent dialogue between segments of South Asian postcolonial studies and Jewish studies which contemplates the resuscitation of Zionism as a project of 'self-empowerment' and 'liberation'.

The roundtable will speak to these developments within academia, while also considering the wider backdrop within which they take place. Indeed, invoking notions of victimhood, Zionism and, in particular, Hindutva, have been championed as postcolonial/decolonial political projects by their proponents with growing regularity. Such claims occur alongside mounting documentation of the increasingly close alliance between Israel and India, and Hindutva and Zionism, in recent years, enabling the settler colonial projects in each country to flourish. These connections also transcend the boundaries of the nation-state, reflected by affinities between segments of the Jewish and (Hindu, upper caste) Indian diaspora. This roundtable takes these wide-ranging developments as a starting point to assess the state of postcolonialism and Jewish studies in the current conjuncture with attention to the distinct, but connected, projects of Zionism and Hindutva.

Membership

Track Classification: Colonial, Postcolonial and Decolonial Working Group