It is well known that certain strands of Indological scholarship played a small but not insignificant role in the 19th century German nationalist venture that sought to trace German ancestry to the Vedic/Indo-German/Indo-Aryan civilization. A nation’s identity often sustains itself by demarcating itself from an “Other” or an “anti-nation”. In the process of searching for an Indo-German/Aryan identity, Indological scholarship also contributed to the concept of an “anti-nation” – the Hebraic Semites. The Indological discourse on Aryans and Semites evolved in various ways during the 20th century, occasionally reaching beyond the academia. This lecture traces the evolving perspectives on Aryan and Semite identities in Indological scholarship until 1945.

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