

Muslims in Global Societies Series

Günther Jikeli

Joëlle Allouche-Benayoun *Editors*

Perceptions of the Holocaust in Europe and Muslim Communities

Sources, Comparisons and
Educational Challenges

 Springer

Muslims in Global Societies Series

Volume 5

Series Editors

Gabriele Marranci

Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia; Cardiff University, Wales, UK

Bryan Turner

The Graduate Center, CUNY, New York, USA

For further volumes:

<http://www.springer.com/series/7863>

Günther Jikeli • Joëlle Allouche-Benayoun
Editors

Perceptions of the Holocaust in Europe and Muslim Communities

Sources, Comparisons
and Educational Challenges

 Springer

Editors

Günther Jikeli
International Institute for Education
and Research on Antisemitism
London, UK

Joëlle Allouche-Benayoun
Groupe Sociétés, Religions, Laïcités -
Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique
CNRS, Paris, France

ISBN 978-94-007-5306-8

ISBN 978-94-007-5307-5 (eBook)

DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-5307-5

Springer Dordrecht Heidelberg New York London

Library of Congress Control Number: 2012952933

© Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht 2013

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are reserved by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed. Exempted from this legal reservation are brief excerpts in connection with reviews or scholarly analysis or material supplied specifically for the purpose of being entered and executed on a computer system, for exclusive use by the purchaser of the work. Duplication of this publication or parts thereof is permitted only under the provisions of the Copyright Law of the Publisher's location, in its current version, and permission for use must always be obtained from Springer. Permissions for use may be obtained through RightsLink at the Copyright Clearance Center. Violations are liable to prosecution under the respective Copyright Law.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

While the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication, neither the authors nor the editors nor the publisher can accept any legal responsibility for any errors or omissions that may be made. The publisher makes no warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein.

Printed on acid-free paper

Springer is part of Springer Science+Business Media (www.springer.com)

Acknowledgements

The cooperation with the authors included in this book has been exceptional. We are grateful for their distinguished papers and for their patience during the review process. We would like to thank our friends and colleagues who have read portions of this manuscript and provided us with the benefit of their insights. Most of the papers were presented and discussed at a conference on “European Muslims’ Perceptions of the Holocaust”, in Paris in 2010, which was organised by the Groupe Sociétés, Religions, Laïcités – CNRS, Paris, the International Institute for Education and Research on Antisemitism and the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation, supported by the Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah, the Mémorial de la Shoah, the Foundation “Remembrance, Responsibility and Future” and L’Ecole pratique des hautes études (EPHE, Paris-Sorbonne). We are especially grateful to Philippe Portier, Kim Robin Stoller, Rita-Danielle Breseghello and Bérénice Benayoun.

Contents

Introduction	1
Joëlle Allouche-Benayoun and Günther Jikeli	
History Aside?	13
Georges Bensoussan	
Antisemitism and Holocaust Remembrance	19
Juliane Wetzel	
Participation of European Muslim Organisations in Holocaust Commemorations	29
Michael Whine	
The Evolution of Arab Perceptions of the Holocaust	41
Esther Webman	
Perceptions of the Holocaust in Turkey	61
Rıfat N. Bali	
Antisemitism and the Politics of Holocaust Memorial Day in the UK and Italy	71
Philip Spencer and Sara Valentina Di Palma	
‘Hamas, Hamas, All Jews to the Gas.’ The History and Significance of an Antisemitic Slogan in the Netherlands, 1945–2010	85
Evelien Gans	
Perceptions of the Holocaust Among Young Muslims in Berlin, Paris and London	105
Günther Jikeli	
History and Memory of the Other: An Experimental Encounter-Programme with Israeli Jews and Palestinians from Israel	133
Monique Eckmann	

Speech Acts. Observing Antisemitism and Holocaust Education in the Netherlands 153
Remco Ensel and Annemarike Stremmelaar

Challenges and Opportunities of Educational Concepts Concerning National Socialist Crimes in German Immigration Society..... 173
Mehmet Can, Karoline Georg, and Ruth Hatlapa

Contributors 189

Index..... 193

Introduction

Joëlle Allouche-Benayoun and Günther Jikeli

The way people think and feel about the systematic murder of European Jewry – today commonly termed as the Holocaust or the Shoah – is changing over time.¹ The erosive effect of time seems unavoidable, but, as Alvin Rosenfeld has accurately demonstrated in his recent book “The End of the Holocaust”, perceptions of the Holocaust are often distorted by certain cultural pressures and values (Rosenfeld 2011). They are also influenced by the collective identity and, particularly in Europe, by the role the respective country played during the Holocaust. Among other factors, the forms of commemoration of the Holocaust differ depending upon whether major segments of the society were perpetrators, bystanders or victims; whether the country collaborated with National Socialism in the murdering of Jews or not; or if the country fought against Germany. The same is true on an individual level: even distant family members who had a role in the Holocaust can have a significant impact on how their children and grandchildren think and talk about the Holocaust. However, there is a particular culture of remembrance and even to some degree “Europeanisation” concerning the commemoration of the Holocaust (Leggewie 2009).

¹ In the French-speaking sphere, the term Shoah is usually used to designate the Jewish genocide perpetrated by the Nazis. The term Holocaust is preferred by most scholars in the English-speaking sphere with all of its implicit religious meanings regarding sacrifice for and to God. Both terms are alternately used throughout this collection, depending upon the respective origin of the author of each article. In September 2011, the term Shoah was the focus of an intense polemic in the French media: is it or is it not the right word?

J. Allouche-Benayoun (✉)
e-mail: joelle.allouche@gssl.cnrs.fr

G. Jikeli
e-mail: g.jikeli@iibsa.org

Today, the Holocaust is condemned in the public discourses in European countries and blatant Holocaust denial is generally discredited and even illegal in some European countries (Bazyler 2006). Holocaust education is part of the curriculum in many countries, and Holocaust memorials and commemorations are given importance by the political and intellectual elite (OSCE/ODIHR 2010, 2006). However, some developments concerning the remembrance of the Holocaust give cause for concern. For example, Yehuda Bauer expressed his “deep concern about repeated attempts to equate the Nazi regime’s genocidal policies, with the Holocaust at their centre, with other murderous or oppressive actions; an equation that not only trivialises and relativises the genocide of the Jews perpetrated by the Nazi regime, but is also a mendacious revision of recent world history.” (Bauer 2009). He did so on the occasion of a resolution passed on 2 April 2009 by the European parliament recognising a day of remembrance for victims of both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union on the anniversary of the infamous Ribbentrop-Molotov agreement. In private discourses, the trivialisation of the Holocaust is often more bluntly expressed, partly motivated by the wish for “normalisation” and by secondary antisemitism.² However, the comparison of the Holocaust to other genocides is legitimate and even deepens our understanding of the Holocaust. As a matter of fact, biased views begin with equating rather than comparing. Or when “the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people” are denied, as noted in the ‘Working Definition of Antisemitism’ EUMC/FRA 2005). Surveys indicate both a lack of knowledge about the Holocaust³ as well as widespread biased views of the Holocaust and Holocaust remembrance. According to a 2009 European survey, in Germany, 48.9% believed that Jews try to take advantage of their having been victims during the Nazi era, 32.4% in France and 21.8% in Britain. And 45.7% of Europeans in 7 countries agreed with the biased analogy between the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Holocaust, namely that “Israel is conducting a war of extermination against the Palestinians.” (Zick et al. 2009, 2011).

Over the course of time, the Holocaust has become a symbol of absolute evil, of barbarity, and at the same time Jews have become the symbol of the absolute victims. But in anti-Zionist discourse, Zionists and Zionism (and sometimes “the Jews” by proxy) are portrayed as the absolute evil, which explains such widespread equations between the Holocaust and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, the conception of the Shoah as both the absolute evil and the European evil explains the pedagogical will across all of Europe to provide a translation for “never again”.

² Secondary antisemitism is a term coined by Peter Schönbach (1961) which is understood as the psychological phenomenon that the mere presence of Jews can remind non-Jews of the Holocaust and their feelings of guilt which then in turn produces negative sentiments against Jews. The Israeli psychiatrist Zvi Rex is often quoted with the phrase, “The Germans will never forgive the Jews for Auschwitz” (Broder 1986).

³ In Germany, 39% of the general population said in 2005 that they are not well informed about “the time before 1945”, 40% said so in the UK and 24 % in France (IMAS International 2005). A poll commissioned in 2009 by Miramax and the London Jewish Cultural Centre showed that only 37% of 11–16year olds in Britain knew that the Holocaust claimed the lives of six million Jews, with many drastically underestimating the death toll. Some of the results were published by *The Telegraph* on March 9, 2009.

School trips and other pilgrimages to Auschwitz are the most concrete illustration of this; and yet, aren't these journeys just fulfilling a self-satisfying compassionate impulse instead of engaging in a real social, historical and contextualised analysis?

The history of the Shoah remains challenging for humanity and for European societies in particular. However, a new challenge has been discussed in recent years. Some migrant communities which are now part of European societies although they do not share the European history of the Shoah, seem to be reluctant to remember the murder of European Jewry as one of the greatest crimes of humanity. Teachers have reported difficulties teaching about the Holocaust, particularly with some Muslim students (Brenner 2004).⁴ The reluctance of European Muslim organisations to participate in Holocaust commemorations, or their boycotting of such events, is another indication of the problematic views of the Holocaust held by some European Muslims.⁵

Some surveys point in the same direction. In Germany in January 2010, *Die Zeit* published a survey of 400 people of Turkish origin concerning their views of the Holocaust. Sixty-eight percent admitted that they know little about the Holocaust and 40% said that people of Turkish background living in Germany should not be concerned with studying the Holocaust (*Die Zeit* 2010). While this hints at an identitarian approach to remembrance (possibly adopted from the identitarian approach observed in many people within German mainstream society⁶) and a denial of its significance for all members of humanity, other polls reveal attitudes of “soft-core” Holocaust denial, to use a term coined by Deborah Lipstadt. A poll of Muslims in the UK from 2006 showed that only a third believed that the Holocaust happened as it is taught and 17% said that it has been exaggerated (GfK NOP 2006).

However, one should be careful not to essentialise such views; being Muslim does not lead to biased views of the Holocaust or of Jews.⁷ But then, what does influence Muslims' views of the Holocaust? European Muslims are largely migrants or their descendants who arrived in Europe after the Second World War. Are they also influenced by the collective identity of their country of residence? How strong is the influence of their ethnic and religious identities? What is the role of private and public discourses about the Holocaust in the countries of origin? Muslims are the largest religious minority in Europe today. European societies such as Germany, France and Britain include increasing numbers of immigrants, many of them with Muslim background. Estimations fall between 13 and 20 million Muslims in the European Union (European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia

⁴ A report for the French government for 2010 confirmed that antisemitic attitudes are often voiced by Muslim students and “can be manifested during lessons about the genocide of Jews” and are often related to anti-American attitudes (Haut Conseil à l'intégration 2011, 94). Difficulties of Holocaust Education due to antisemitic attitudes among Muslim students were also mentioned in a study in Britain (The Historical Association 2007, 15).

⁵ The Muslim Council of Britain has repeatedly and explicitly boycotted the national Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration in the UK. See Michael Whine's chapter in this volume (Chap. 4).

⁶ See Mehmet Can's, Karoline Georg's and Ruth Hatlapa's chapter in this volume (Chap. 12).

⁷ Such an essentializing and effectively racist view is conveyed by a few authors such as Hans-Peter Raddatz (2007), see Widmann 2008.

2006, 29; Open Society Institute 2010, 22). Surveys show that Muslims strongly identify both with their country of residence and with their religious identity (Gallup 2009, 19).

One can assume that European Muslims see the Holocaust as being less central to their history than other events. In comparison to the majority of other Europeans whose parents or grandparents lived in Europe during the Second World War, the discourses within Muslim families are generally less influenced by either their family history during WWII or by a collective feeling of guilt. However, the persecution of Jews by the National Socialists and their collaborators was not limited to Europe. The majority of European Muslims come from countries such as Turkey, or from North African and South-East Asian countries that only played a minor role in the Holocaust and from which no or relatively few Jews were deported to German death camps in Eastern Europe. Bosnia is the exception to this rule: most Bosnian Jews were murdered (Gilbert 2002, 75), often in collaboration with the Muslim population. However, the history of Albania shows that some Muslims played an extraordinary role in saving Jews from deportation despite the German occupation between 1943 and 1944 (Gershman 2008), while others collaborated with the National Socialists in the persecution of Jews.⁸ Many Muslim countries in North Africa and South-East Asia were colonised by Great Britain or France. This had the effect of making Nazi propaganda partially successful as an ideology of resistance against the colonising powers. The case of European Muslims from North Africa and “their” history vis-à-vis Nazism and the Holocaust is complex. In fact, the four Maghreb countries were directly concerned with Nazism and the prolegomena to the Shoah, to varying extents. In Tunisia, a country which was occupied by the Germans for a few months in 1942–1943, forced labour camps for Jews were constructed and the deportations of Jewish Tunisians to extermination camps started during that period. This was met with complacency by the “indigenous” population. Being part of France, Algeria implemented antisemitic racial measures ordered by Pétain, as was the case throughout the national territory. This was actively supported by the local French population and passively by the Muslim population. Since the 1942 allied landing in Algiers prevented the German occupation, there were no deportations out of Algeria. However, Algerian Jews residing in France were deported and exterminated, in particular those living in the South (Marseille, Perpignan, Bordeaux). Many were taken because Muslim auxiliaries informed the national police or the military that they were Jews, just on the basis of distinguishing their family names from Muslim family names. On the other hand, the King of Morocco was commanded by the French protectorate authorities to distinguish the country’s Jews by the use of some physical marker, but he refused. As far as Libya is concerned, it was the setting for very important military operations (for example, Tobrouk, El Alamein) and Libyan Jews were deported to different camps in and outside of Libya, under Italian occupation (Roumani 2008). Finally, the French

⁸ For a debate on the role of Arab Muslims during the Holocaust, see: Satloff (2006), Cüppers and Mallmann (2006), Nordbruch (2009), Metzger (2007).

army for the liberation of the territory, commonly known as the “Army of Africa”, counted many “indigenous” Muslims among its ranks,⁹ most of whom originated from three of the Maghreb countries in particular. Therefore, the Muslim populations of the Maghreb, under French jurisdiction to varying extents, were all directly implemented in this world conflict for diverse reasons; some due to the fact that they were occupied by the Germans, and others had young men who were enlisted in the French army and/or were being held as prisoners in Germany (Allouche-Benayoun and Doris 1998; Borgel 2007; Ghez 2009).

Despite these historical ties, denial and minimisation of the Holocaust is widespread today in the mainstream of many of European Muslims’ “home” countries, which is analysed in Chaps. 5 and 6 by Esther Webman and Rifat N. Bali.¹⁰ The Holocaust is often portrayed in an antisemitic way as a tool used by Israel; conspiracy theories about alleged Nazi-Zionist collaboration are widespread and Israel is equated with Nazi Germany.

The level of open Holocaust denial observed in some mass media in Muslim-majority countries is not accepted in European countries, as demonstrated by the case of the Turkish daily *Vakit*, which was printed and distributed in Germany until 2005 when it was banned by the German authorities for its denial of the Holocaust, as well as for its antisemitic propaganda.¹¹ The *Vakit* case also demonstrates that some European Muslims are influenced by biased views about the Holocaust propagated by media from their “home” country.

However, there are encouraging, new developments in some countries, particularly in Morocco. The Moroccan king publicly spoke of the importance of Holocaust commemoration for the first time in March 2009, and independent from the monarchy, a group of Moroccan educators and activists visited Yad Vashem in Israel for the first time in 2009 (Maddy-Weitzman 2010). Subsequently, in March 2011, teachers and educators from Morocco participated in a seminar at the Mémorial de la Shoah in Paris, led by Samia Essabaa, a teacher at a professional college in a suburb of Paris, and also the person who initiated a programme for college students with migrant backgrounds to take trips to Auschwitz (Essabaa and Azouvi 2009). Moreover, the Aladdin Project launched a first-time series of public lectures on the Holocaust in Muslim countries in 2010 (Projet Aladin 2010). Also, Turkish state television TRT started to air the film *Shoah* by Claude Lanzmann on 26 January 2012 in its entirety.

This volume focuses on perceptions of the Holocaust among Muslims in European societies; exploring sources, factors of influence and discussing the challenges for education and remembrance in Europe’s increasingly multicultural societies.

⁹ In *le Monde.fr* on September 27, 2006, Benjamin Stora estimated that there were 300,000 “indigenous” people in the Army of Liberation who landed in Provence, making up 23% of the total (Stora 2006).

¹⁰ See also Litvak and Webman (2009) and Bali (2009).

¹¹ Some of the antisemitic articles and cartoons in *Vakit* have been documented in Kreuzberger Initiative gegen Antisemitismus (2004).

George Bensoussan opens up this collection with his essay on the development of perceptions of the Holocaust in Europe since 1945, when the “opponents of the Enlightenment” disappeared without a trace and were reduced to the Nazi Party and a group of criminals and psychopaths who had surrounded Hitler, obfuscating the fact that a major part of Germany shared their ideology. These initial false perceptions gave way to a number of myths that are still relevant today; Bensoussan names the myth of alleged victims’ passivity, the narrative that the State of Israel was born out of the Shoah and the concept of totalitarianism which denies the specificity of the Shoah and Nazism. He describes the transition from silence about the Holocaust after the Second World War to the current centrality of the Holocaust. His particular French perspective, set against a laïc background, sharpens the problem of conceptualising the victim group as a result of the irrationality of antisemitism and the Holocaust: why were the JEWS persecuted? Due to the fact that, with only a few exceptions, the whole of Europe was involved in the crime of the Holocaust, this history contributes to European unity. The Holocaust is rejected, but it is also a source of secondary antisemitism. Bensoussan sees this as being one of the main sources of the vilification of Israel today. In the Arab world, however, empathy in regards to the Shoah is a source of frustration and seen as a concession to “the Jews”, including Israelis. Bensoussan offers a number of explanations for the current ignorance and anti-Israeli and antisemitic sentiments among Muslims and Arabs.

Juliane Wetzel examines the relationship between the persistence of antisemitism after 1945 and Holocaust remembrance. She discusses that despite there being a taboo against open antisemitism, precisely because of Auschwitz, feelings of guilt led to the phenomenon of antisemitism – so called secondary antisemitism – exposing a failure to come to terms with the past and resulting in Holocaust denial and the minimisation of the Holocaust. The trivialisation of the Holocaust, demonstrated by the comparison of Israel to Nazi Germany and antisemitic tropes such as “Jews talk too much about the Holocaust”, as well as the reversal of perpetrators and victims in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, has become a widespread phenomenon across Europe. The Middle East conflict has become a backdrop for the projection of antisemitic sentiments, often related to the Holocaust. These feelings can be expressed even by those who present themselves as anti-antisemites and anti-racists. This leads to challenges in Holocaust education, even more so in classrooms with a significant number of students with migrant backgrounds whose parents came to Europe after the Shoah. Myths about the Holocaust are prominent not only in Arab media but also on the Internet. Wetzel highlights the difficulty of respecting the singularity of the Holocaust with regard to other atrocities and totalitarian regimes.

Michael Whine presents an overview of the participation of European Muslim organisations in Holocaust commemorations. The Holocaust is viewed by many Muslims, particularly Arabs, as a European tragedy which led to negative implications and suffering in the Arab world through the creation of the State of Israel. The Holocaust is therefore often related to the Nakba. Whine’s analysis focuses on Muslims’ participation in Holocaust commemoration on the Holocaust Memorial Day, local initiatives in schools, Jewish-Muslim dialogue and the reaction of Muslim students to Holocaust education in school. Whine acknowledges that Muslims played only a minor part as victims or perpetrators during the Holocaust, but he argues that

the rejection of Holocaust commemoration as a form of Zionist propaganda is an adoption of Islamist and Arab nationalist antisemitism. Whine presents a case study of the Muslim Council of Britain that illustrates this kind of reaction to the Holocaust Memorial Day. However, he also presents examples of a more constructive approach by other organisations, individual Muslims and approaches to education in the UK, France, Austria, Switzerland, Norway, Germany and the Netherlands.

Esther Webman provides an historical overview of Arab perceptions of the Holocaust from 1945 to today. She shows that there was indeed empathy with the Jewish victims of the Holocaust immediately after the war and gives heartening examples from empathetic literary fiction. However, even in these early stages, before the creation of the State of Israel which led to the foundations of the subsequent discourse on the Holocaust in Arab countries, dealing with the Holocaust was often mixed with negative feelings about Jewish immigration to Palestine. Webman describes the prominent standpoint in the Arab discourse, which claims that the Arabs had and still have to pay “the price” of losing Palestine to the Jews because of the Holocaust, although they took no part in it. She delineates the development of a new emerging discourse which acknowledges the Holocaust and leaves outright Holocaust denial more and more to Islamists. Nevertheless, the mainstream discourse still minimises the Holocaust and connects the discourse about the Holocaust with a delegitimisation of Israel and Zionism.

Rifat N. Bali analyses the perceptions of the Holocaust in Turkey. In general, the history of the Holocaust is largely ignored in Turkey and rarely part of any school curriculum. Nevertheless, Bali shows that the Holocaust is frequently used as a reference point and in a context unique to Turkey – without a deeper understanding or interest in its history. Commentators in Turkey often insist on the uniqueness of the genocide of the Jews primarily in order to reject dealing with the Armenian genocide. The Holocaust is generally accepted as an historical truth and Holocaust denial (namely, the framing of the Holocaust as an alleged lie fabricated by “the Jews” or “the Zionists”) is rather confined to Islamists but rarely challenged. However, a common trope in Turkey is the accusation that the alleged preoccupation with the Holocaust in the West is a result of propaganda by the “Jewish lobby” on behalf of Israel, which is allegedly committing genocide against the Palestinian people.

Philip Spencer and Sara Valentina Di Palma analyse and compare reactions to the Holocaust Memorial Day in the UK and Italy. Since the inception of Holocaust Memorial Day, the event and its focus have come under considerable attack from a number of quarters, particularly (although by no means exclusively) from some sections of Muslim communities. This chapter provides an analysis of some of the advanced arguments and the extent to which they reflect a growing and wider reluctance to acknowledge the centrality of antisemitism to the Holocaust in both the UK and Italy. It suggests that this may be connected to a re-articulation of antisemitism in a new context, which both risks silencing survivors anew and is counterproductive to thinking about the problem of genocide today.

Evelien Gans examines the roots of the slogan ‘*Hammas Hamas, all Jews to the gas*’ which has been shouted in the Netherlands during recent demonstrations, often by individuals of Muslim heritage. It shows an unsettling perception of the Holocaust which is clearly antisemitic. Gans asks what has happened to the memory of the gas

chambers used to murder European Jewry. She demonstrates how slogans linking gas and Jews go back a long time in the Netherlands' post-war history. Gans traces the globalisation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the impact of its one-sided and often false portrayal in the media on the streets of the Netherlands and other European countries. The continuation of (secondary) antisemitism in the Netherlands and a very particular "pornographic" form of antisemitism leads to strange reactions and relations to Muslim antisemitism which Gans exemplifies with the case of Theo van Gogh and Geert Wilders.

Günther Jikeli presents research based on in-depth interviews with 117 young male Muslims from Berlin, Paris and London. Their views reveal a number of patterns of thinking regarding the Holocaust and related issues. Knowledge about the Holocaust is limited; there is however a core knowledge about its victims and perpetrators which is shared by most interviewees. Jikeli shows that perceptions of the Holocaust are influenced by views of Jews. Hence antisemitic views shape distorted views of the Holocaust, such as minimising the Holocaust, drawing inappropriate comparisons, outright Holocaust denial or even the approval of the Holocaust. The use of the term Holocaust as an empty metaphor is the result of a lack of understanding or acknowledgement of the specificity of the Holocaust and the drawing of inappropriate comparisons invites the minimisation of the Holocaust. This chapter demonstrates that equating Jews with Nazis or today's Palestinians with Jews in the past is motivated by antisemitism and shaped by a Manichean view of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. By contrast, a lack of hatred against Jews facilitates not only a condemnation of the atrocities of the Holocaust, which most interviewees exhibit, but also enables empathy with its Jewish victims – regardless of the level of previous historical knowledge.

Monique Eckmann discusses an experimental exchange programme between Israeli Jews and Palestinians from Israel based on the educational concepts of Peace Education and Holocaust Education. The programme brought the participants together to deal with the history and the memory of the Holocaust, as well as with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Nakba. An analysis of interviews conducted with the participants leads us to inquire into the relation between identity and the perception of the Other and the difficulties and dilemmas faced by the participants when dealing together with the history and the memory of the Holocaust. Eckmann discusses the possible objectives and limits of such a project, as well as the necessary conditions for the emergence of a culture of mutual recognition, without negating the asymmetrical character of the prevailing situation, nor comparing suffering, nor equating historical facts. She demonstrates that focusing on perpetrators and bystanders, rather than on victims, can produce common insights for both sides.

Remco Ensel and Annemarike Stremmelaar critically discuss the debate in the Netherlands about resistance to Holocaust education among Muslim students. They observed a series of Holocaust lessons in secondary education at Amsterdam schools focusing on an extra-curriculum teaching project with peer educators who teach about the Holocaust and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Leaving aside the discussions about the combination of the two themes within one course, they analyse what happened during the lessons. Somewhat surprisingly, there is less enthusiasm for

discussion of the Middle East conflict. Similar to Jikeli's findings, Ensel and Stremmelaar note the existence of an alternative "narrative" about the role of Jews in history that includes antisemitic attitudes. However, slogans, songs and associations with anti-Jewish references are often used in a provocative way. The authors strongly advocate for the entire "speech act" to be taken into consideration, pointing to the difficulties in finding out what is actually said in the classroom. It remains difficult for teachers to decide which remarks and behaviours can be tolerated and which are "over the edge".

Mehmet Can, Karoline Georg and Ruth Hatlapa explore how the traditional German perception of the remembrance of the Shoah, as well as existing educational concepts to learn about or to learn from crimes of National Socialism, are challenged by the fact that Germany is an immigration country where a variety of historical narratives exists. They argue that the traditional educational approach to this part of German history is in effect exclusionary to people with migrant backgrounds. Their paper deals with three main questions: (1) What mechanisms of exclusion exist in the common forms of teaching and remembering the Shoah in Germany? (2) What forms of access to the history of the Shoah are available to young Muslims and what forms of reference do they use in their discussion of it? (3) How can educational concepts provide wider accessibility to learning about National Socialist crimes while embracing the complexity of a modern migration society?

The contributions to this volume come from all across Europe and beyond and provide abundant evidence of a new form of antisemitism which is being structured around the memory of the Shoah. To such an extent, in fact, that we can consider some discourses on the Shoah as indicators of current antisemitism, which paradoxically use the mass assassination of Jews in order to recycle old antisemitic clichés. The Holocaust is instrumentalised (to express antisemitism) and the demonstrations for its remembrance backfire on Jews: if people are talking about the Holocaust then it is because Jews are in charge of the media and have a lot of power.

Parts of the European Muslim population groups are subjected to "double bind" logic: on one hand, they are influenced by discourses disseminated in their country of origin which minimise or obscure the Shoah (Pierre-André Taguieff 2010), and which, in assigning exclusive responsibility to Christian countries, expand for some the myth of the golden age of a hypothetical "Jewish-Arab symbiosis". At the same time, there is a violently anti-Zionist discourse whose argumentation is saturated with antisemitic clichés and conspiracy theories and the notion that Jews and Muslims are supposedly eternal enemies is widespread. This may be one of the reasons for a relatively high level of antisemitic attitudes among many Muslims in Europe and thereby negatively influenced views of the Holocaust.¹² On the other

¹² Surveys show higher levels of antisemitic attitudes among Muslims compared to non-Muslims in Europe (The Living History Forum 2004, 45, 135–136; The Pew Global Attitudes Project 2006, 42–43; Brettfeld and Wetzels 2007, 274–275; Elchardus 2011; Frindte et al. 2012, 245–247). For a debate on anti-Jewish attitudes among Muslims in Europe and "new antisemitism", see also Jikeli (2012), Bergmann and Wetzel (2003), Klug (2003), Wiewiorka (2007).

hand, European Muslims live in societies which, at least in official discourses, assume responsibility for the massacring of Jews, recognise the State of Israel and condemn statements which deny the Shoah and/or are openly antisemitic.¹³

However, anti-Zionist discourses are becoming increasingly popular in the mainstream of European societies: the image of the Jews as the absolute victims in the Holocaust is changing or being complemented in a way by the image of the Jews as Zionists as being the absolute evil. “The Palestinians”, on the other hand, are seen as the innocent victims (of the Jews) – an image that invites identification. Muslims have an additional dimension of identification with “the Palestinians” via their common religious identity. However, perceptions of the Shoah are influenced by perceptions of Jews and collective identifications among European populations, Muslim or otherwise.

Collective identification by members of the European mainstream societies might lead to feelings of guilt and to resenting Jews for the Holocaust; it might even trigger the wish to identify Jews as being evil today. Muslims’ collective identifications might lead to negative views of Jews and Israel and therefore to a reluctance to acknowledge that the National Socialists were engaged in a murderous war against every single Jew, leading to the murder of 6 million Jews and the near annihilation of European Jewry. A true acknowledgement of that fact prohibits any equation to recent conflicts and surely to the Middle East conflict. However, perceptions are only partially influenced by historical facts.

References

- Allouche-Benayoun, Joëlle, and Bensimon Doris. 1998. *Les juifs d’Algérie: Mémoires et identités plurielles*. Paris: Stavit.
- Bali, Rifat N. 2009. Present-day anti-semitism in Turkey. *Post-Holocaust and Anti-Semitism*. Institute for Global Jewish Affairs, No. 84, August 16. http://www.jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DRIT=3&DBID=1&LNGID=1&TMID=111&FID=624&PID=0&IID=3048&TTL=Present-Day_Anti-Semitism_in_Turkey.
- Bauer, Yehuda. 2009. Memo to the ITF on comparisons between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Regime. http://www.erinnern.at/e_bibliothek/miscellen/23-august-ein-gedenktage-als-ausdruck-eines-gemeinsamen-europaischen-geschichtsbewusstseins-oder-von-geschichtsklitterung/yehuda_bauer_memo_to_the_itf.pdf.
- Bazyler, Michael J. 2006. Holocaust denial laws and other legislation criminalizing promotion of Nazism. Paper presented at a lecture at Yad Vashem. <http://www1.yadvashem.org/yv/en/holocaust/insights/pdf/bazyler.pdf>.
- Bergmann, Werner, and Juliane Wetzel. 2003. Manifestations of anti-semitism in the European union. First semester 2002. Synthesis report on behalf of the EUMC. http://www.cohn-bendit.de/depot/standpunkte/Manifestations%20of%20anti-Semitism%20in%20the%20European%20Union_EN.pdf.
- Borgel, Robert. 2007. *Étoile jaune et croix gammée*. Collections Témoignages De La Shoah. Paris: Editions Le Manuscrit.

¹³ For example, in France, since the 1960s: the cases of Rassinier, Faurisson, Garaudy and recently, Dieudonné.

- Brenner, Emmanuel. 2004. *Les territoires perdus de la République: Antisémitisme, racisme et sexisme en milieu scolaire*. Paris: Mille et une nuits.
- Brettfeld, Katrin, and Peter Wetzels. 2007. *Muslims in Deutschland*. Berlin: Bundesministerium des Inneren.
- Broder, Henryk M. 1986. *Der ewige Antisemit: Über Sinn und Funktion eines beständigen Gefühls*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch.
- Cüppers, Martin, and Klaus-Michael Mallmann. 2006. *Halbmond und Hakenkreuz*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.
- Die Zeit. 2010. Deutschtürken und der Holocaust: Geteilte Erinnerung, January 21. <http://www.zeit.de/2010/04/Editorial-Umfrage>.
- Elchardus, Mark. 2011. Antisemitism in de Brusselse scholen. In *Jong in Brussel. Bevindingen uit de Jop-monitor Brussel*, ed. Nicole Vettenburg, Mark Elchardus, and Johan Put, 265–296. Leuven/Den Haag: Acco.
- Essabaa, Samia, and Cyril Azouvi. 2009. *Le voyage des lycéens: Des jeunes de cité découvrent la Shoah*. Paris: Stock.
- EUMC/FRA. 2005. Working definition of antisemitism. <http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/material/pub/AS/AS-WorkingDefinition-draft.pdf>.
- European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia. 2006. *Muslims in the European Union. Discrimination and islamophobia*. http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/Manifestations_EN.pdf.
- Frindte, Wolfgang, Klaus Boehnke, Henry Kreikenbom, and Wolfgang Wagner. 2012. *Lebenswelten junger Muslime in Deutschland*. Berlin: Bundesministerium des Inneren.
- Gallup. 2009. *The Gallup coexist index 2009: A global study of interfaith relations. With an in-depth analysis of Muslim integration in France, Germany, and the United Kingdom*. <http://www.muslimwestfacts.com/mwf/118249/Gallup-Coexist-Index-2009.aspx>.
- Gershman, Norman. 2008. *Besa: Muslims who saved Jews in World War II*, 1st ed. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.
- GfK NOP. 2006. Attitudes to living in Britain – A survey of Muslim opinion. <http://www.slide-share.net/brighteyes/attitudes-to-living-in-britain>.
- Ghez, Paul. 2009. *Six mois sous la botte*. Collections témoignages de la Shoah. Paris: Editions Le Manuscrit.
- Gilbert, Martin. 2002. *The Routledge Atlas of the Holocaust*, 3rd ed. London/New York: Routledge.
- Haut Conseil à l'intégration. 2011. *Les défis de l'intégration à l'école*. <http://www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/var/storage/rapports-publics//114000053/0000.pdf>.
- IMAS International. 2005. *Wissensstand zur Zeit und den Geschehnissen vor 1945*. <http://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/496/umfrage/wissensstand-zur-zeit-und-den-geschehnissen-vor-1945/#stat>.
- Jikeli, Günther. 2012. *Antisemitismus und Diskriminierungswahrnehmungen junger Muslime in Europa*. Essen: Klartext.
- Klug, Brian. 2003. The collective Jew: Israel and the new antisemitism. *Patterns of Prejudice* 37(2): 117–138.
- Kreuzberger Initiative gegen Antisemitismus. 2004. *Sonderbeilage zu Vakit*. <http://www.kiga-berlin.org/uploads/Material/Kiga%20Sonderbeilage%20Vakit.pdf>.
- Leggewie, Claus. 2009. Battlefield Europe. Transnational memory and European identity. *Eurozine*. <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2009-04-28-leggewie-en.html>.
- Litvak, Meir, and Esther Webman. 2009. *From empathy to denial: Arab responses to the Holocaust*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Maddy-Weitzman, Bruce. 2010. Sounds from North Africa. *The Jerusalem Report*, January 18.
- Metzger, Chantal. 2007. Amine El Hussein, Grand Mufti de Jérusalem, et le Troisième Reich. *Les cahiers de la Shoah* 9(1): 91–121. <http://www.cairn.info.gate3.inist.fr/revue-les-cahiers-de-la-shoah-2007-1-page-91.htm>.
- Nordbruch, Götz. 2009. *Nazism in Syria and Lebanon: The ambivalence of the German Option, 1933–1945*. London/New York: Routledge.

- Open Society Institute. 2010. *Muslims in Europe: A report on 11 EU Cities*. 2nd ed. New York [u.a.]: Open Soc. Inst.
- OSCE/ODIHR. 2006. *Education on the Holocaust and on anti-semitism: An overview and analysis of educational approaches*. Warsaw: OSCE/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.
- OSCE/ODIHR. 2010. *Holocaust memorial days in the OSCE region. An overview of governmental practices*. Warsaw: OSCE/ODIHR. <http://www.osce.org/odihr/41252>.
- Projet Aladin. 2010. *Projet Aladin*. <http://www.projetaladin.org/>.
- Raddatz, Hans-Peter. 2007. *Allah und die Juden. Die islamische Renaissance des Antisemitismus*. Berlin: Wolf Jobst Siedler.
- Rosenfeld, Alvin. 2011. *The end of the Holocaust*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Roumani, Maurice M. 2008. *The Jews of Libya: Coexistence, persecution, resettlement*. Brighton/Portland: Sussex Academic Press.
- Satloff, Robert. 2006. *Among the righteous: Lost stories from the Holocaust's long reach into Arab lands*. New York: Public Affairs.
- Schönbach, Peter. 1961. *Reaktionen auf die antisemitische Welle im Winter 1959/60*. Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt.
- Stora, Benjamin. 2006. Les indigènes ont découvert la société française. *Le Monde.fr*. Sep. 26. http://www.lemonde.fr/cinema/article/2006/09/26/benjamin-stora-les-indigenes-ont-decouvert-la-societe-francaise_816962_3476.html.
- Taguieff, Pierre-André. 2010. *La nouvelle propagande anti-juive*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France – PUF.
- The Historical Association. 2007. *T.E.A.C.H. Teaching Emotive and Controversial History* 3–19. http://www.history.org.uk/file_download.php?ts=1204732013&id=784
- The Living History Forum. 2004. *Anti-Semitic, Homophobic, Islamophobic and Xenophobic tendencies among the young*. Stockholm: Brottsförebyggande radet (BRÅ) [National Council for Crime Prevention].
- The Pew Global Attitudes Project. 2006. *The great divide. How westerners and Muslims view each other*: <http://pewglobal.org/reports/pdf/253.pdf>.
- Widmann, Peter. 2008. Der Feind kommt aus dem Morgenland. Rechtspopulistische “Islamkritik” um den Publizisten Hans-Peter Raddatz suchen die Opfergemeinschaft mit Juden. In *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 17, 45–68. Frankfurt a. M./New York: Campus Verlag.
- Wieviorka, Michel. 2007. *The lure of anti-semitism: Hatred of Jews in present-day France*. Leiden: Brill.
- Zick, Andreas, Beate Küpper, and Hinna Wolf. 2009. *European conditions. Findings of a study on group-focused enmity in Europe*. Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence, University of Bielefeld. http://www.amadeu-antonio-stiftung.de/w/files/pdfs/gfepressrelease_english.pdf.
- Zick, Andreas, Beate Küpper, and Andreas Hövermann. 2011. *Intolerance, prejudice and discrimination a European report*. Berlin: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Forum Berlin. <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/do/07908-20110311.pdf>.

History Aside?

Georges Bensoussan

Silence falls once again on 1945 Europe. The terror of the last years had just been a side note. Even in Germany, the only people who are deemed responsible are the National Socialist party and the band of “psychopathic criminals” associated with it. The opponents of the Enlightenment who had been involved in intellectual circles since the mid-nineteenth century disappeared without a trace. The Church also suffered an attack of amnesia, convinced that such murderous antisemitism had only been perpetrated by a handful of depraved heathens, that this delirious judeophobia had no roots in Christianity.

A mythology took root in this minefield, and some of those themes still persist up until today: the myth of the victims’ passivity, for example, or that of the State of Israel which was born out of the Shoah; a mythology nourished, moreover, by scholars’ disputes. For instance, the functionalist/intentionalist debate represents an ideological clash: intentionalism illuminates a background of genocidal culture, whereas functionalism frees a national culture from guilt. Finally, the concept of totalitarianism, generalised at the heart of the Cold War, concealed the radical specificity of Nazism: the genocide of a people.

How was the genocide of Jews perceived in France immediately after the war? How did people move from the survivors’ imposed state of silence to the current centrality of the genocide? How was Buchenwald, the symbolic deportation site in the 1950s, supplanted by Auschwitz? How did the Shoah end up subsuming the history of deportation even though the kinds of Jews who were deported were radically different from the political deportees? Why has the common practice in the 1960s of quasi concealing the Vichy Regime been replaced by an obsession which distorts the perception of the issues and forces of the time?

Translated from French by Jessica Ring.

G. Bensoussan (✉)

e-mail: georges.bensoussan@memorialdelashoah.org

For a long time, the idea prevailed that the survivors had kept silent. For the most part, this was just a reassuring myth. A difficulty to comprehend what had happened was transformed into the idea that the witnesses had kept quiet; as if the silence of the contemporaries had been transferred onto the survivors who had, in fact, tried to speak, write and publish following the end of the war. Between the summer of 1945 and the summer of 1948, a book per week was published on this topic. This clearly demonstrates how the purported silence is a myth. As Simone Veil said in 1990, "Nobody wanted to hear us. What we were saying was too difficult". In 1946, it was as if everything had already been heard; one had already spoken "too much" about the deportation. The feeling of saturation which appears to characterise our times today was already at work during that period. Far from being a quantitative given, or an objective fact ("too many books", etc.), this feeling is tied to the very subject of study, a fortiori today, at a time when the Shoah is being instrumentalised for use in mundane reflection.

In France, the silence which settles in during the 1950s was due to the primary focus on the remembrance of communist victims which took precedence over all others. But not only that. It was also due to the concern about Jewish reintegration into the nation, as if distinguishing their particular suffering would amount to pursuing Nazi exclusion policies. In 1945, the survivor is a *victim*. Today, *s/he* is a *hero*. At the same time, one forgets how the shame of having been subjected to *that* plays a role in the silence for many of them. The shame and the guilt for having survived ("Why me?"), with, at the end, this unbearable contradiction between the Dantesque description of the horrors and the suspicion thrown upon one who was able to come back from it.

The specific nature of the Jewish destiny, acknowledged by the other deportees during the ordeal, was forgotten and ignored after the war ended. The historical centrality of the genocide is a *rediscovery* from the 1970s. This tragedy's conceptualisation occurred after its perception because the intellectual categories necessary to reflect upon the novelty of the event had yet to be created. The concentration camp prisoners see mass massacre but they do not think of genocide: we are less able to perceive something if we are not thinking at the same level as what we are living through.

Understanding the specific nature of the Jewish destiny meant challenging one and a half centuries of French Judaism. To what collective could the French Jews belong if they were victims of this particular sort, reserved just for them due to a crime of birth? To a people? To a community? To a nation? The emancipation had ignored all of these categories. The Jews were French citizens, their Jewishness remained a private fact. However, the Jewish community cannot be summed up as having a victim's destiny. In its very alienation, it is responsible for how it is seen based on how it sees itself. The arrival of North African Judaism (and, to a small extent, that of Egypt) turned all order on its head and changed Judaism from a private and cultural force into a cultural, or even national force.

Strengthened by republican principles, which had become for some a form of identity protection, the Jewish community in France found it difficult to include their deaths in the litany of suffering. Why were they dead? For France? For humanity? Against fascism? The old community remained blinded by the virtues of emanci-

pation and by the pseudo victory in the Dreyfus Affair. Blinded as well by the myth that the Jews in France had remained passive before 1939 even though the Jewish organisations of that time had been combative. Just like the Jews in Germany are imagined to have been willingly mute and resigned, when in fact they were mobilised and defensive. The clichés have the virtue of being reassuring, they reduce our anguish.

Similar to in Europe, the survivors who arrive in the United States at the end of the 1940s try to make themselves heard. They are not listened to. They are told that they have to look to the future; that by evoking their suffering, they will create a void around themselves. Even the authorities in the Jewish communities recommend discretion. In 1951, the *American Jewish Committee* deplores Jews “letting their strong emotions run away with them” regarding Germany (concerning the question of reparations). Some Jewish leaders think that it is necessary “to turn the page”. In this way, the Shoah must remain confined to the Jews’ private sphere. Only a few even mention the catastrophe in opinion polls concerning Jewish identity. Moreover, the Cold War soon relegates the Shoah (the Holocaust) to the background. The only two historical books published on the genocide during the 1950s do not come out of the United States, but rather out of the United Kingdom (Reitlinger) and France (Poliakov). The first does not get reviewed by the American press and the latter sells a few hundred copies. During this same time period, Raul Hilberg is confronted with scores of obstacles while trying to publish his political science thesis on the “destruction of the European Jews”. After searching for an editor for 6 years, he finally succeeded in 1961. In 1960, the journalist William Shirer published a 1,200 page volume on the “Third Reich”. Tremendous success. However, out of all those pages, he only dedicated 30 of them to the genocide.

At the heart of the Cold War, the Shoah is an obstacle in American political life because the specific nature of the crime makes it difficult to confound Nazism with Communism by locating both under the rubric of totalitarianism. This concept was therefore well-timed in order to clear the German people of culpability (it was generally said, “Terror prevented us from reacting.”). Nazism is stigmatised as being totalitarian (which it was), but Hitlerism is erased even though it is the principle reality in Germany at that time. More than Nazism. Along with Hitlerism, the anti-semitism exhibited by Hitler and his close circle who made the decision to perpetrate genocide is also erased. The totalitarianism thesis allows the obfuscation of the fact that a major part of Germany stood with this man, or with this ideology; it allows the country to be painted as the victim, as if nobody had supported, or profited from, that regime. As if coercion had been enough to keep Germany under Hitler’s control until the Soviet tanks arrived in Berlin.

The thesis of Nazi totalitarianism exonerates the Germans from all historical responsibility and transforms them into victims of a violent regime. At this time, between 1950 and 1960, the United States opens its borders to ex-Nazis from the Baltics, Ukraine, Hungary, etc. who were fleeing communist regimes. In this Cold War climate, Jews become suspect because they are said to be animated by a “spirit of vengeance”. Even more so because the image of the Jewish communist has long been established in the United States, as in the rest of the Western world (1917 [since the Russian Revolution, editor’s note]).

Over a period of several years, a state rose up to liquidate a group of humans for no useful reason. The random character of the Shoah is its primary character. This meaningless event actually makes sense; because it confused our classical political culture, because it rendered the majority of our intellectual fundamentals obsolete, because it rendered our academic dissertations on culture null and void, because it questions the triumph of the opponents of Enlightenment in the Europe of 1900 and forces us to consider together both culture and the extreme genocidal violence, the legacy of the severe violence of the twentieth century. Consider the interweaving of barbarity and civilisation. The optimisation *and* the negation of life. The individualist discourse *and* the massified society.

Although politics traditionally uses action as a means, ideology alone is in command here and action is no longer a means but rather an end. Never had a state mobilised an entire society in order to destroy the members of a group of humans wherever they may be on Earth. The random character of the “Final Solution” sheds light on its ideological roots. This specificity, the attack perpetrated against the human condition by this transgression, is the main reason that it must never be forgotten.

If all society must forget in order to function (cf. Renan), then the opposite is proven in this case. When mass murder destroys social ties, then it is only the work of the historian which makes it possible to weave them together again by putting it into writing. Reconciliation is only possible for adversaries who confront each other in battle. The genocide, however, was not a battle, but rather a *manhunt* reducing those hunted to the status of pests. Since it signals an irreversible attack on their status as human beings, it forever contaminates the lives of survivors and their descendants. “To be on this Earth without asking questions, that is to lose for all time” wrote the sociologist Wolfgang Sofsky on the Jewish condition after 1945.

Hence the need to bear witness, this will to tell and to transmit what they had endured, observed in the case of all of the ghetto chroniclers during all phases of the tragedy: Shloyme Frank in Lodz, Hillel Seidman, Abraham Lewin, Haim Kaplan, Emanuel Ringelblum in Varsovie, Etty Hillesum in the Netherlands, etc. More broadly speaking, this will to survive in order to tell one’s story is a part of all historical tragedies: for example, in the case of the political deportation of the French Communards (1871, Jean Allemane, Louise Michel), the resistance fighters (Germaine Tillion), the antifascists (Carlo Levi) and the Gulag survivors (Chalamov, Soljenitsyne, etc.).

Today, Europe seems to be plagued with a gnawing anxiety, making it look back at the twentieth century’s worst catastrophe in order to understand its progression and its intellectual and psychological mechanisms as essential elements of this mass crime. The biopower (or biopolitics), mass insanity, the reign of collective emotion, the state as superpower, the collective stigmatisation which frees society of its internal violence.

It is being plagued by guilt as well, at least in the case of a portion of its elites who are willing to reflect on this past. For, in fact, the whole of the old continent was involved in the crime, other than a few exceptions. This is why, paradoxically, the Jewish genocide contributes to European unity. Its memory has become central to these institutions, as if Europe could only construct itself based on its rejection of this crime. Although this guilt does stimulate consciousness, there is also a flip

side: ultimately, the resentment that is felt ends up being placed on the victim. “They will never forgive us for what they did to us” declared a Jewish protagonist in Axel Corti’s film, *Santa Fe*.

Hence the manifold stigmatisations and condemnations of Israel, the omnipresence of the Jewish people’s state in the media, its depiction as a rogue state, when so many others are discreetly forgotten; even those where human rights are trampled underfoot, as is the case in Arab states, China and Iran.

For the Arab world, empathy concerning the Shoah is a permanent source of frustration. The more the genocide is crucial to the Jewish consciousness, the more Arab hostility regarding this tragedy is reinforced. It is as if the concept of a national Jewish consciousness (from now on inseparable from Auschwitz) upsets the Arab world’s old image of submission. This is the nodal point at which we are today, holding on to a precarious equilibrium; that of an Arab-Muslim antisemitism which has taken on absurd proportions while the Western world remains deaf. Because one cannot criticise anything that is done by those colonised in the past. Because the conviction that a victim cannot in turn become an oppressor is still upheld. Because, in the name of the “good savage”, one is persuaded that antisemitism is nothing but a product imported from the West and one believes the illusions that maintain the collective blindness to any *pre-genocidal context*.

As in all rituals, the commemorations become more important than the event commemorated. The commemorative mania leads to a religion of remembrance, evidenced by the proliferation of memorial museums. It is inseparable from the democratic societies preoccupied with individualism. If each person is the alpha and omega of the world’s reflection, then society as subject disappears. The concept of an individual subject as king crushes social cohesion and creates an anomie society tormented by mass solitude. The “responsibility to remember” must be understood from this standpoint: it rings out like the search for one’s roots and the pursuit of a legitimation undermined by the absence of transcendence.

Antisemitism and Holocaust Remembrance

Juliane Wetzel

Outright antisemitic stereotyping in the public discourse and the political establishment has been a taboo in Germany since the Second World War. But antisemitic sentiments, which were deeply rooted in everyday culture, lingered on despite the knowledge of the genocide of the European Jews, expressed in subtler forms in private areas. My colleagues Werner Bergmann and Rainer Erb marked this tension between the public ban on antisemitism and the continuity of antisemitic prejudices as communication latency (*Kommunikationslatenz*) (Bergmann and Erb 1986). In Germany, but also in Austria and other countries which were involved in the Holocaust, this is due to – as we call it – secondary antisemitism. In other words, a form of antisemitism after Auschwitz which is always connected to arbitrary feelings of shame and guilt and is closely tied to repression strategies against coming to terms with the past and the Holocaust. Extreme forms result in threats aimed against Jewish cemeteries and institutions taking over a sort of deputy role, as well as threats against memorials with the obvious intention to destroy the remembrance of the Nazi persecution. Extreme forms are Holocaust denial, mostly limited to the far right, but the intention to minimise the Holocaust by belittlement, palliation, apology or strategies of trivialising the national socialist genocide of the Jews or comparisons to other atrocities for personal, but after all, for political purposes, is still an attitude to be seen in broader parts of society. Such resentments are fuelled by a refusal to recognise the National Socialist persecution and the murder of Jews (“question of guilt”).

There is a correlation between a deep desire to come back to normal, a defence against feelings of guilt and hostility toward Jews, as for example reflected in the demand of about half of the German population to draw a final line –“Schlussstrich” – under the past. Only then, it is claimed, could there be a normalisation of the relation

J. Wetzel (✉)
e-mail: wetz0154@mailbox.tu-berlin.de

between the Jewish minority and the majority society. “The Jews” however – as many people believe – get in the way of this normalisation, because they allegedly force the Germans to continuously remember.¹ The intention here is to maintain that “the Jews” are responsible for the past being always kept in the present. This debt defence mechanism leads eventually to antisemitic resentments declaring the Jews as the scapegoat by using classic antisemitic patterns.

Secondary antisemitism is no longer a specific feature of Germany or Austria alone; this secondary antisemitism emerged parallel to the internationalisation of Holocaust remembrance, the implementation of Holocaust memorial days and ritualised commemoration forms. A reversal of the perpetrator-victim role is taking hold across Europe with regard to the conflict in the Middle East or the trivialisation of the Holocaust (or as Yehuda Bauer calls it – soft revisionism) by comparisons of Israeli policies in the occupied territories to the Holocaust. This is reflected in the item “Jews still talk too much about what happened to them in the Holocaust” of the regularly performed survey by the Anti-Defamation League in different European countries. In 2009, 44% of those asked in the respective countries believed that this is “probably true” (Anti-Defamation League 2009b). This shows that a relevant percentage connect Holocaust remembrance to “the Jews”. It also makes it clear that with the extensive media coverage of Holocaust related issues, as we have seen in the last decades, it is not only a feeling of satiation which may be triggered, but it could also give the wrong impression that Jews are constantly talking about their fate. The high percentage of agreement is also an expression of defence against dealing with the past and attributing responsibility to the Jews. In the end, such feelings could influence ways of antisemitic thinking proposing that Jews are against letting go of the past. People who hold such feelings usually express them verbally in inner circles – apart from those who are associated with the extreme right. In Germany and Austria, violent antisemitic assaults, mostly targeting Jewish memorials and symbols, are usually committed by perpetrators from the extreme right who, by trying to eliminate remembrance, want to get rid of the past. That is, rather than targeting individuals with personal attacks, the perpetrators have sought to destroy Jewish life by means of removing the historical memory of Nazi persecution. In Germany in 2008, according to the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (*Verfassungsschutz*) 44 out of a total of 47 violent antisemitic attacks were committed by far right-extremists, two by people from extreme left-wing circles and one by so called “foreigners”. In 2009, these violent acts decreased to 41 cases, 31 committed by far right-extremist perpetrators; in 2010, out of a total of 37 cases, 31 were politically motivated and perpetrated by far right-extremists.²

¹ See Anti-Defamation League (2009a), 8: 45% of the interviewed Germans and 55% of those from Austria agreed to the following item “Jews still talk too much about what happened to them in the Holocaust” as “probably true.”

² “Antisemitisch motivierte Gewalttaten” (antisemitically motivated violent acts). The data were provided by the German Ministry of Interior (Department ÖS II 4), based on information from the Federal Criminal Police Office (Bundeskriminalamt).

Letters to members of the Central Council of Jews in Germany and the Israeli Embassy in Berlin show explicitly how closely antisemitic resentments are connected with Holocaust remembrance and the struggle to evade a debate on narratives of memory and responsibilities for the past. Today's strategies are using the Middle East conflict as a platform to express antisemitically connoted feelings while evading the taboo of antisemitic expressions. An example of such letters from July 2006 reads as follows: "I am particularly irritated that even the Jews, who should be sensitised through their experiences with the Hitler regime, are becoming war criminals" (Schwarz-Friesel 2010). Such expressions are not coming from extreme political areas but from the mainstream. Many of the letters are explicitly antisemitic but, as in all over Europe, the authors tend to use the Middle East conflict as a screen. In Germany and in Austria this transfer is emotionally still based on a defence of shame and a suppression of remembrance as well as a projection of self-pity. In the last 10 years, these patterns of antisemitism have emerged even in the Arab world and in Iran, where in the political arena Iranian's president Ahmadinejad uses it in its most extreme form (F.A.Z. 2006; Naji 2008; Amirpur 2010). Forms of Holocaust trivialisation, if not even Holocaust denial, are used in this region in the insinuation that Israel has gained the right to exist only on the basis of the "Holocaust hoax".

In Poland and other Eastern European countries, we have to face resentments based on nationalism and on a defence of feelings of guilt similar to Germany and Austria connected to a widespread antisemitism which led to pogroms even after 1945.³ In January 2010, Polish Catholic bishop Tadeusz Pieronek, in an interview to a Catholic website, accused Jews of using the Holocaust as a weapon of propaganda to obtain unjust advantages, such as American support for Israel, and in order to treat Palestinians like animals (Spiegel online 2010a).

Even leftist parties are not free from secondary antisemitism if terms such as "Blitzkrieg", "war of annihilation" (*Vernichtungskrieg*), "ghettoisation", "deportation" or similar concepts are used to blame Israel – vocabulary that contains echoes of the Nazi era. Also, news reports sometimes contain an unmistakable tendency towards over-dramatisation in a way that is reminiscent of Hitler's classic accusation (in particular during his speech of 30 January 1939) that it is the Jews who are driving the world towards war. As a leitmotif, this idea may also tap into a hidden fear – as in Germany or Austria – of being punished for Nazi atrocities, amplified and enhanced by the classic stereotype that portrays Jews as "vengeful" (in often using the misinterpreted biblical quotation "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth"). This exaggeration hints at the hidden motif to set Israeli atrocities against those of the Nazis. They make it possible to "expose" Israel's motivation for carrying out such actions as a result of their inherent nature as a "[people of] perpetrators", thereby making Nazi crimes of the past seem less deplorable. People who hold such feelings present themselves as anti-antisemites and anti-racists but use the wide variety of

³ For example the pogrom in Kielce/Poland in July 1946 (Gross 2006). For the mass emigration of Jewish survivors in the immediate aftermath of the Kielce pogrom, see Königseder and Wetzel (1994) (English edition: Königseder and Wetzel 2001).

antisemitic prejudices and demonising comparisons with Nazi policies against the Jews, which they articulate via anti-Zionism/anti-Israel antisemitism. In other words, traditional antisemitism has metamorphosed into a more respectable form, and is positioned to make its way into the political mainstream. Criticism of Israeli politics from this perspective invokes a double-standard in which Israel is evaluated differently than other states, false historical parallels are drawn (equation with the National Socialist era), and antisemitic myths and stereotypes are used to characterise Israeli policies. There is a widespread expectation which assumes that Israel would have to be more moral than other states because Jews have gone through the experience of the Holocaust. The connection between antisemitism and anti-Israeli/anti-Zionist sentiments lies in this opportunity of a reversal of the perpetrator-victim role and of a platform which is easy to use for the expression of traditional antisemitic stereotypes against Israel while evading the bad taste of being an antisemite or even to avoid prosecution. This also influences the public discourse on the Holocaust and educational tools on the issue of Holocaust education.

Today, in many European countries we are facing new challenges in relation to Holocaust education in classrooms. Migration and political changes require new approaches and a move away from traditional patterns. Moreover, there is a growing feeling among pupils, but also among teachers, that the presence of the topic in the media – especially in times where anniversaries are pending – provides sufficient information and that it therefore no longer needs special treatment in the classroom. The results of a survey conducted in April 2005 by the Second German Television and the newspaper “Die Welt” made it clear that this is a fallacy: 45.4% of 24-year-olds did not know what the term “Holocaust” means. The younger the respondents were, the less knowledge they had. In January 2005, Forsa conducted a survey on behalf of the journal “Der Stern”. A quarter of the respondents responded to the question of whether there were any positive sides of national socialism with “yes, there were” and 48% of the respondents believe that Germans don’t have a special responsibility vis-à-vis the Jews (Forsa 2005). These results were confirmed by an survey conducted in Germany in 2008 by TNS Infratest/Allbus. A quarter of the respondents responded to the question of whether there were any positive sides of National Socialism with, “yes, there were” (TNS Infratest Sozialforschung/Allbus 2009).

The first results of a still ongoing research project on “Antisemitism among young people in the context of migration and social exclusion” (Follert and Stender 2010), based on group discussions and individual interviews with youngsters of different migrant backgrounds, showed that talking about Jews was entirely riddled with antisemitic stereotypes, but that no hardened antisemitic world-view was to be found. It turned out that antisemitic stances were expressed with brutal frankness only by young people from the former Soviet Union – the so called late repatriates (“Spätaussiedler”). Young people with Turkish and Arab migrant background and indigenous Germans revealed a significantly higher level of sensitivity with respect to antisemitic expressions. During the discussions with teachers and social workers, it became especially apparent that antisemitic attitudes were projected almost exclusively onto “Muslim” students and that the antisemitic prejudices exhibited by the children of Russian repatriates have not even been noticed by the pedagogues.

Educators seem to have their own antisemitism, which is fuelled by not reclaiming one's own feelings of guilt and which are not questioned in a self-reflexive way.

Nevertheless – generally speaking – it has to be clear that knowledge about the Holocaust does not prevent one's having antisemitic stereotypes. However, blaming Jews for dominating public discourse with Holocaust related issues does not only serve as a tool to prevent debating responsibilities, it also serves as a platform to carry on old antisemitic stereotypes. Such ways of thinking play a role in current discourses about the Holocaust in Germany, but also in other Eastern and Middle European countries dealing with their double historical past – the Nazi period and the Stalinist era. Historians compare these two in order to evaluate matching patterns and to specify the differences. The political scientist Claus Leggewie once formulated: “The difficulty of the European culture of memory is to expose the singularity of the breakup of civilisation by the industrially and bureaucratically organised destruction of avoiding the historical comparison and downplaying the systematic extermination of ‘class and people’s enemies’ in the Soviet sphere” (Leggewie 2009a).⁴

In public debates about both dictatorships, there is a tendency to leave the level of scientific approach and to equate both dictatorial systems. This opens up ground for a trivialisation of the Holocaust, which might also create a challenge to memorial sites which have to cover both historical periods. In the meantime, such tendencies have left the level of public discourse and led to a European Parliament resolution on 2 April 2009 under the name “European conscience and totalitarianism.” This resolution refers to the Parliament’s declaration, adopted in 2008, on the proclamation of 23 August as “European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism.” Although the resolution points to the “uniqueness of the Holocaust” which “must nevertheless be acknowledged” it also “calls for the proclamation of 23 August as a Europe-wide Day of Remembrance for the victims of all totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, to be commemorated with dignity and impartiality” (European Parliament 2009). The date refers to the Hitler and Stalin’s “non-aggression treaty” and its secret additional protocol between Germany and the Soviet Union which was concluded on 23 August 1939. 363 members of the European Parliament were in favour of the resolution, 226 against it. In the resolution, it is emphasised that “Europe will not be united unless it is able to form a common view of its history, recognises Nazism, Stalinism and fascist and Communist regimes as a common legacy and brings about an honest and thorough debate on their crimes in the past century”. Similar to debates in Germany about the flight and expulsion of Germans after the war from the then Czech Republic and Poland, which in some parts of the society led to an equalisation with the Holocaust, the European Parliament’s decision seems to go in the same direction.

Both narratives have to have a place in public discourse and victims of the Stalinist era also have the right to remember their fate on a special memorial day. But the Nazi crimes have to have their own space in the collective memory. With the

⁴Can also be found online on the Eurozine website (Leggewie 2009b).

possible implementation of one common memorial day for both dictatorships, the European Parliament takes the wrong symbolic stand. Interestingly, the parliament's decision provoked nearly no media coverage in Germany. Whether the resolution will be put into practice in a variety of countries is not yet clear. However, in Estonia, 23 August has been adopted as a common memorial day. In Germany, hopefully we can rely on the sensibility which exists in a large part of the political establishment and the resistance by NGOs which are involved in a protest against this equalisation, which does not take into consideration the Holocaust as paradigmatic genocide and could lead to a loss of an adequate remembrance as well as resentments being more easily formulated in public discourse on the basis of secondary antisemitism.

Referring to the Holocaust in a trivialising way, such as by making jokes, can be consciously antisemitic if it is done to offend and humiliate Jews. The Holocaust has become a theme in traditional and contemporary forms of antisemitism. For example, some integrate the Holocaust into antisemitic conspiracy theories, suggesting that it is "a Jewish matter" and a way for Jews to gain, so the argument goes, even more money and control. The most controversial notion in this context is the idea of an alleged "Holocaust industry" being run by Jews.

Comparisons between the Holocaust and the politics of the Israeli government as well as the operations of the Israeli Defence Forces in the occupied territories are not at all limited to far right, far left and anti-globalisation groups or migrant societies. This demonisation is also being used increasingly in the mainstream discourse and finds its expression in the media. In particular, cartoons published in European newspapers as well as on the Internet provide an easy basis for the transmission of such stereotypes. The internet – and here especially Web 2.0 offers from YouTube, MySpace, Twitter and Facebook – has become the platform where different extreme political groups transmit their antisemitic, Holocaust trivialising propaganda, frequently networking with each other and providing content which is often read by youngsters who are in no way prepared to read and look at these websites with a critical perspective. This is even more problematic if teachers praise the internet as a source of information without sensitising the youngsters accordingly. As we have seen, Holocaust remembrance and antisemitism do have close connections which are often expressed on the World Wide Web, not only scientists, but also teachers and decision makers, as well as the public at large, need to watch the internet more carefully as a propaganda tool of antisemitism coming out of different political areas. It is not only necessary to organise counter-platforms, but also to provide the pupils with mechanisms to deal with the variety of information.

Today, we have to make note of the awareness to and analysis of antisemitism within the academic world, in the better part of the political establishment, as well as amongst public opinion leaders. In November 2008, in memory of the *November-pogrom* 1938, the German Parliament adopted a resolution against antisemitism which focuses on the support of Jewish life in Germany and intensive work on pedagogical measures against antisemitic tendencies. The parliamentarians agreed upon the establishment of an expert body to organise and supervise this initiative. Based on the so-called "Working definition of antisemitism", compiled by the Human Dimension Department (ODIHR) of the Organization for Security and Cooperation

in Europe (OSCE) and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA; former European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia – EUMC) in 2005, one of the main tasks of this expert body on antisemitism will also be to raise awareness on subtle forms of antisemitism often not recognised as such. There it becomes obvious that, for a majority of German society, the boundary between legitimate criticism of Israel and the use of antisemitic stereotypes is not clear enough. They are not aware that by using the same old, traditional stereotypes known from the long history of antisemitism, and also influenced by resentments based on “secondary antisemitism”, it is no longer the Jew who is targeted but rather the State of Israel.

Since the second Intifada, the tradition of demonising Jews has been transferred to the State of Israel. The French philosopher Pierre-André Taguieff calls this *nouvelle judéophobie planétaire*, “new planetary judeophobia”, the idea that all the world’s problem are due to the existence of Israel (Taguieff 2002). This new “judeophobia”, as Taguieff points out, was initiated by radical Islamic activists, by the heirs of “third-worldism”, and by far-left anti-globalisation activists. Such groups accuse the Jews of being racist themselves. Thus, according to Taguieff, there seems to be an “anti-Jewish anti-racism”. In this way, traditional antisemitism has metamorphosed into a more respectable form, and is positioned to make its way into the political mainstream. Taguieff is right in his description of contemporary forms of antisemitism and the different perpetrator fields but I would not support his thesis of a “new antisemitism”. We are still confronted with the same old stereotypes, it is only that they have been transferred to today’s political realities, used by different political groups against an alleged collective “Jew” equated with the State of Israel. In this framework, the strategy of diminishing Holocaust remembrance and trivialising the genocide of European Jews is used to deny Israel’s role as a Jewish state and safe homeland in the aftermath of National Socialist persecution.

In recent years, there has been a boom of Holocaust and National Socialism related German documentary films, movies and documentary soaps. The attention they have received and the media reaction, which has given the impression that these films finally explain the Holocaust and the Nazi period, has left historians a little perplexed. Some of the films and the following media coverage suggested that these films and documentaries showed new, never researched parts of the history or that they would transmit the historical truth – which is not the case. People are attracted by the stories and have stormed into the cinemas. This is also the case with some TV broadcastings which had a high percentage of viewers. Hundreds of books, endless historical research projects and exhibitions on the Holocaust and the National Socialist period obviously have had no greater influence – but one-sided books or films had and still have an enormous impact on the public. Nevertheless, all this is not only negative – such events also push debates and lead to new perspectives the public would never gain from research books.

In the meantime, the debates on the Holocaust have left their national framework and are discussed at an international level, not least because of the international exchange of new ways and methods to give answers to the current demands on the topic. This puts the era of National Socialism and the genocide of the European

Jews in a European and international historical context, which can fertilise the debates and the examination of the past in the national context in Germany. The creation of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (ITF) in 1998 was an expression and result of what is now to be described as a globalisation of “Holocaust education”. This international body currently includes 31 member states. Membership in this international task force requires not only a dedicated commitment to support “Holocaust education”, but also the inclusion of this subject in national curricula and teacher training seminars. Based on their awareness of the possible implications on Holocaust education of the antisemitic clichés which are spread throughout society, the ITF recently founded a subcommittee on “Antisemitism and Holocaust-denial” for developing strategies against antisemitic attitudes and providing educational tools covering possible challenges in classrooms.

Experts on pedagogical issues recently pointed out the possibility that knowledge about the Holocaust might also have a positive impact on youngsters with migrant background. An understanding of the German past might be an important tool on the way to integration. National Socialism and the genocide of the European Jews is not only an historical period, it influences current interior policy as much as foreign policy, is still an ongoing process in the courts (for example, there are still legal processes in progress in Germany concerning the allocation of ghetto pensions and social insurances for work performed in displaced persons camps after the war) and has an impact on today’s public discourse in Germany. After all, debating the Holocaust and its impact on the European Jews in multicultural school classes could create a greater awareness and sensibility for Holocaust related issues insofar that people who came to Germany because of persecution in their respective countries learn about the migration experiences of Jews while escaping Nazi persecution. Also, even though any equalisation of both experiences must always be avoided, the comparison could engender empathy within today’s migrant society and serve as an eye opener for dealing with the Jewish fate.

Revised educational programmes have to be developed that refer to the new foundations and motives underlying antisemitism, even if they are still transmitted by using the traditional stereotypes. In a multiethnic and multicultural society, Holocaust education has to take the different backgrounds of the pupils into consideration, and must also address unfounded and pernicious myths about the Shoah, which are virulent not only in Arab, Iranian and Turkish media but are also most prominent and accessible on the internet.

Educating about Holocaust issues is implicitly the providing of information about the history of the victims. It is therefore also important to focus on the positive aspects, and not only those stemming directly from the Nazi era (Righteous Among the Nations and the like). Jewish history must also be included in the curricula, as part of European history and part of the history of the respective countries, and not as an extra part as we have seen done recently, for example, in the Berlin history curricula for secondary schools. In such cases, Jews seem to play an extra role in history – this suggests seeing Jews as a non-participating minority in society. Holocaust education sensitises students to the perspective of the victims of antisemitism;

it highlights questions of individual responsibility and abuse of power; it confronts learners with the possible consequences of antisemitism, and it also encourages them to speak out, side with democracy, and overcome indifference in situations where Jews and others are being discriminated against. However, Holocaust education cannot, and is arguably not designed to, ensure the prevention of antisemitism. Antisemitism and knowledge about the Holocaust are not mutually exclusive, but can exist in parallel. Contemporary antisemitism often evolves around issues that are linked to events that have occurred since 1945, such as the ongoing Middle East conflict, or to debates about the Holocaust, i.e., issues that by definition cannot be addressed within the framework of Holocaust education, that require a different focus. Given that some teachers reportedly avoid teaching about the Holocaust for fear of encountering antisemitic prejudice and Holocaust denial among their students, awareness-raising measures and discussions about antisemitism may in some cases even be regarded as instrumental for the effective implementation of Holocaust education. The Holocaust and antisemitism are topics that can and should be connected, but teaching about one cannot replace teaching about the other.

References

- Amirpur, Katjun. 2010. Eine Antwort auf Matthias Küntzel. *Netzwerk Fachjournalisten Islamische Welt*. <http://www.nefais.net/author/kamirpur/>.
- Anti-Defamation League. 2009a. Arab Media Review. *Anti-semitism and other trends*. http://www.adl.org/Anti_semitism/arab/Arab-Media-Review-Jul-Dec-2009-Cartoon.pdf.
- Anti-Defamation League. 2009b. *Attitudes toward Jews in seven European Countries*. http://www.adl.org/Public%20ADL%20Anti-Semitism%20Presentation%20February%202009%20_3_.pdf.
- Bergmann, Werner, and Rainer Erb. 1986. Kommunikationslatenz, Moral und öffentliche Meinung. *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 38: 223–246.
- European Parliament. 2009. Resolution on European conscience and totalitarianism. *European Parliament*. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2009-0213+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>.
- F.A.Z. 2006. Sympathie für den Satan? *FAZ.net*. <http://www.faz.net/artikel/C30351/iran-und-israel-sympathie-fuer-den-satan-30033126.html>.
- Follert, Guido, and Wolfram Stender. 2010. das kommt jetzt wirklich nur aus der muslimischen Welt. Antisemitismus bei Schülern in der Wahrnehmung von Lehrern und Schulsozialarbeitern – Zwischenergebnisse aus einem Forschungsbericht. In *Konstellationen des Antisemitismus. Antisemitismusforschung und Sozialpädagogische Praxis*, ed. Wolfram Stender, Guido Follert, and Mihri Özdoğan, 199–223. Wiesbaden: S Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften/GWV Fachverlage GmbH, Wiesbaden.
- Forsa. 2005. Sind Sie der Meinung, dass wir heute noch eine besondere Verantwortung gegenüber den Juden haben? (Survey conducted on behalf of ‘Der Stern’). *Statista*. <http://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/537/umfrage/verantwortung-deutscher-gegenueber-juden/>.
- Gross, Jan. 2006. *Fear: anti-semitism in Poland after Auschwitz: An essay in historical interpretation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Königseder, Angelika, and Juliane Wetzel. 1994. *Lebensmut im Wartesaal: Die jüdischen DP's (displaced persons) im Nachkriegsdeutschland*. Orig.-Ausg. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verl.
- Königseder, Angelika, and Juliane Wetzel. 2001. *Waiting for hope: Jewish displaced persons in post-World War II Germany*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

- Leggewie, Claus. 2009a. Schlachtfeld Europa – Transnationale Erinnerung und europäische Identität. *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik*. 54(2): 81–93.
- Leggewie, Claus. 2009b. Schlachtfeld Europa: Transnationale Erinnerung und europäische Identität. *Eurozine*. <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2009-02-04-leggewie-de.html>.
- Naji, Kasra. 2008. *Ahmadinejad: The secret history of Iran's radical leader*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Schwarz-Friesel, Monika. 2010. 'Ich habe gar nichts gegen Juden!' Der 'legitime' Antisemitismus der Mitte. In *Aktueller Antisemitismus: Ein Phänomen der Mitte?* vol. 36, ed. Evyatar Friesel, Jehuda Reinharz, and Monika Schwarz-Friesel. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter.
- Spiegel online. 2010. Polnischer Bischof nennt Holocaust 'Propaganda-Waffe'. *Spiegel online*. <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/0,1518,673999,00.html>.
- Taguieff, Pierre-Andre. 2002. *La nouvelle judéophobie*. Paris: Fayard/Mille et une nuit.
- TNS Infratest Sozialforschung/Allbus. 2009. Inwieweit stimmen Sie der aussage zu, dass der Nationalsozialismus auch seine gute Seiten hatte? *Statista*. <http://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/176912/umfrage/meinung-nationalsozialismus-hatte-auch-gute-seiten/#stat;%20bzw.%20>
<http://www.gesis.org/dienstleistungen/daten/umfragedaten/allbus/studienprofile/2008/>.

Participation of European Muslim Organisations in Holocaust Commemorations

Michael Whine

Introduction

The Holocaust was truly a European tragedy, but it had, and continues to have implications for the entire world, and while Jews were by no means the only victims, it is their victimisation and Muslim reaction to the Holocaust that I wish to discuss.

The attitude of the Muslim world and of Muslim organisations in Europe therefore reflects this reality. It is viewed by many Muslims, particularly Arabs, as a tragedy of Europe's making, but in this context it becomes important to note that European Muslims are of mixed origin, with those of Turkish, South East Asian and North African origin predominating. Those of Arab origin are in the minority within Europe.

Many Arab Muslims may argue that Europe's murder of its Jews led to mass suffering within the Arab world, and among the Palestinians in particular. The Holocaust therefore serves for them as a reference point by which comparisons are made with the Palestinian *Naqba*.

However, this analysis focuses on three aspects of Muslim reaction to the Holocaust within Europe: to national and locally organised Holocaust commemoration, which takes place increasingly on 27 January, the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz; local and often small commemorative initiatives, which may take place in the context of school programmes, or as part of Jewish Muslim dialogue; teaching the Holocaust in school systems and Muslim students' reactions to that process.

Given that the Holocaust was a uniquely Jewish tragedy, it may be simplistic and over optimistic to expect Muslim communities to participate in its commemoration. Moreover it was a European tragedy in which the Muslim world played only a very small part. Muslim countries were only involved because they were occupied by Nazi forces or their allies, as in North Africa, the Balkans and the Muslim republics

M. Whine (✉)
e-mail: Mike.W@thecst.org.uk

of the Soviet Union. Muslims therefore suffered from occupation in the same way that other occupied people suffered. It is true that there were Muslim recruits to the ‘Third Reich’, particularly those who heeded the call from Haj Amin Al Husseini, and the anti-Soviet volunteers from Muslim Central Asia. They fought with the *Wehrmacht*, and some were involved in war crimes and the mass killings of Jews and other war crimes. But while Nazi propaganda was beamed in large quantities to the Arab and Muslim world in an effort to sway public opinion against Jews, Muslims generally suffered as other occupied people. They were however aware of the Nazi persecution of the Jews and the Holocaust, as the Arab language media reported on it as fully as the western media, as Litvak and Webman have made clear.¹

Research by Yad Vashem in Israel, and by Robert Satloff, also now identifies Muslims who saved, or otherwise assisted Jews under Nazi occupation, putting themselves in danger in the process. Like those who saved Jews in Europe they constitute only a small minority of the populations from which they came (Satloff 2006).

In some ways it is therefore understandable that Muslims living in Europe wish to play no part in memorialising or commemorating the Holocaust. Moreover the Palestinian narrative dominates contemporary Muslim discourse, allowing little to intrude that is not viewed as Zionist propaganda.

That however is to take a narrow view, and one which is informed by the antisemitism of the Islamists and the Arab nationalists of the War and post War era. It is also noteworthy that the centre of Holocaust denial propagation has shifted in recent years from the American and European far right to the Muslim world, with Iran elevating it to the level of foreign policy, in their effort to try to undermine one important reason for the existence of the State of Israel.

International Commemoration

Two major international agreements mark and commemorate the Holocaust: the UN 2005 General Assembly Resolution on Holocaust Remembrance, which designated 27 January as the International Day of Remembrance and called on member states to develop educational programmes ‘which will inculcate future generations with the lessons of the Holocaust in order to prevent future acts of genocide’; the 2000 Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust, by which signatory states committed to implement national policies and programmes in support of Holocaust education, remembrance and research (Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust 2000; UN General Assembly 2005). The Forum established the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research (ITF), with a rotating chairmanship, which is head-quartered in Berlin.

¹ Recent books on this subject include: Herf (2009), Johnson (2010), Litvak and Webman (2009), Kuntzel (2007), Dalin and Rothmann (2008).

Jewish communities and Israel of course commemorate *Yom Hashoah* on 27th Nisan, which usually falls at the end of April.

So far 31 countries have joined the ITF, and formal relationships have been established with a further three. Apart from Turkey and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (both observer countries), they include no Muslim, or Muslim majority states.

The UN does not monitor Holocaust commemoration, so it is not possible to judge what initiatives are being carried out by member states, although in 2010 the UN did extend their Outreach Programme to include an Anne Frank Twitter Campaign, aimed at young people around the world.² In October 2007, the General Conference of UNESCO agreed to explore the role it could play in promoting awareness of Holocaust remembrance through education and in combating all forms of Holocaust denial. The resolution was adopted in recognition of the UN 2005 resolution, and the subsequent resolution which condemned Holocaust denial (UNESCO 2007a, b).

Other international agreements to memorialise the Holocaust include a resolution passed by the European Parliament in 2005, which notes the rise in antisemitism, that the Holocaust has been seared on the consciousness of Europe and that it poses a risk to overall security. It calls for remembrance activity, education and school programmes to be carried out with “the utmost historical vigour” (European Parliament 2005).

A later European Parliament resolution in 2009, noted that while “millions of victims were deported, imprisoned, tortured and murdered by totalitarian and authoritarian regimes during the 20th century in Europe...the uniqueness of the Holocaust must nevertheless be acknowledged” (European Parliament 2009).

The Council of Europe notes in its booklet on ‘Teaching Remembrance – education for the prevention of crimes against humanity’, that ministers of education meeting in 2002 at the invitation of the French chairmanship of the ITF decided to set aside a “Day of Remembrance” as from 2003 in all schools in their respective countries to commemorate the Holocaust and give thought to ways of preventing such events from recurring. It further notes that the date for such commemoration is to be left to individual states (Council of Europe 2009).

In carrying out its mandate on tolerance and non-discrimination, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights publishes a multi language guide to preparing Holocaust memorial days, which provides teachers with practical examples of commemoration and suggestions for schools’ activity. It also publishes an overview of good governmental practices by member states. (OSCE/ODIHR and Yad Vashem 2006; OSCE/ODIHR 2006, 2010).

Lastly, the Polish government holds an annual commemorative religious service at Auschwitz, which is attended by states’ representatives and the invitation list is extensive, but only one Muslim state, Turkey, has participated in these

²<http://twitter.com/UNandHolocaust>.

commemorations, although it boycotted a conference organised by Yad Vashem in Jerusalem in August 2010.

Thus memorialisation of the Holocaust is mandated by international agreements, and governments have now begun the process of commissioning and publishing educational material, and constructing commemorative activity. And yet many European Muslims resist the process.

Muslim Reactions to Holocaust Commemoration

One Middle Eastern perspective was recently provided by Gilbert Achcar, a professor at London University's School of Oriental and African Studies, in a series of interviews following the publication of his book, 'The Arabs and the Holocaust' (Achcar 2010a).

Achcar suggests that western-style outright Holocaust denial is marginal in the Arab world. He notes that many Arabs have a more complex relationship with the Holocaust, and believe its reality is amplified by Zionism, or that they are so exasperated by Israel's existence that Holocaust denial becomes a form of retaliation (Achcar 2010c). He does however admit that opinion polls attest to the rise of denial (Telhami 2010).

It is possible to make three comments about national and international Muslim organisations in general terms. The first is that they are not bound by international and diplomatic agreements or protocol. Turkey, a secular Muslim country would have been invited to Auschwitz memorial meetings as a state. It is one which borders Europe, is a member of the OSCE, and an aspirant member of the EU. In some senses it was therefore incumbent on Turkey to participate in the Auschwitz commemoration.

The second is that there are good grounds for suspecting that some of the most active and prominent Muslim organisations in Europe are Islamist bodies (in the sense that they are influenced by the radical ideologies of Al Banna, Maududi and others), or are at least led or influenced by Islamists. Given that the core ideology of Islamism (in both its Arab and south east Asian variations) incorporates antisemitic themes as core values, it is unlikely that they would participate in Holocaust commemorative events.³ In Italy, for example, Muslim leaders attend national and local commemorations, as described briefly below, but the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood – aligned Union of Italian Islamic Communities (Unione delle Comunità e Organizzazioni Islamiche in Italia) do not.⁴

The third is that not all states have national representative Muslim bodies. Several governments have sought to assist and fund the establishment of a unitary Muslim organisation, but with singular lack of success. Muslim participation in Holocaust

³ For example, the Dublin-based European Council for Fatwah and Research, the Brussels based Federation of Islamic Organisations in Europe.

⁴ Email to author, Archivio del Pregiudizio, Milan, 20 April 2010.

commemoration tends therefore to be limited to non Islamist or moderate clerics and community activists.

However, quantifying any Muslim participation is difficult as no records are maintained or published, and indeed there is no reason why there should be any record of their participation. In some European states, particularly in northern Europe, the number of Muslims is very small as a percentage of the population as a whole and governments may not seek close or specific engagement with their Muslim communities, or attempt to incorporate their leadership and membership, in such activity, to the extent that others do.

It is therefore not easy to monitor Muslim groups' participation in national Holocaust commemoration events. The country where Muslim groups' participation is the subject of most government and media attention is the UK. Indeed, the British government had made it the cornerstone of its relationship with the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB): 'participate in Holocaust Memorial Day and the government accept you as a legitimate partner; refuse to do so and the government will not deal with you' has been its argument.

To date, the MCB, the largest and the most representative of the many Muslim communities and tendencies in Britain, has found one excuse after another not to attend. Between 2001 and 2007, the MCB proclaimed that it would not attend the national event because it only dealt with the *Shoah*, deliberately avoiding the fact that the *Shoah* constitutes only one half of the national remembrance activity. The other half focuses on Rwanda, Cambodia and Srebrenica, the Serb mass murder of Muslims. In 2007 however, it decided to participate, but withdrew again in 2009, in solidarity with the Palestinians in Gaza after Israel's Operation Cast Lead incursion (Majendie 2005).

A second specious argument has been that the MCB will not attend unless Israel's so-called 'mass murder' of Palestinians in 1948 is also recognised.

It is known that these arguments have been advanced forcefully within the MCB Executive by the Deputy General Secretary, Dr Daoud Abdullah and others aligned with Islamist ideologies, including the recent former General Secretaries, Sir Iqbal Sacranie and Dr Mohammed Abdul Bari (inthenews 2007; Cooper and Cooper 2008; Stuart 2009).

The MCB does though acknowledge the Holocaust: it does not align itself with the Holocaust denial camp. A statement issued in 2009 stated that "the MCB does not wish to minimise the tragedy of the holocaust or demean or disturb its annual memorial."⁵

However, non Islamist members of the MCB Executive have attended over the years, in defiance of MCB policy, suffering no retribution.⁶

In 2010, the former MCB spokesman, Inayat Banglawalla, attended, in the company of a prominent member of the Jewish community who is engaged in Muslim Jewish dialogue, although his public persona rests on fiercely anti Zionist views.

⁵For example, see interview with Sir Iqbal Sacranie, then MCB General Secretary, BBC Panorama, 21 August 2005.

⁶For example, MCB Executive members Afzal Kahn and Sheikh Abduljalil Sajid, among others, attended on several occasions.

Other British Muslims also attended this year, including representatives of Quilliam, the campaigning anti radical group founded by former leaders of *Hizb ut Tahrir*, British Muslim Forum, and the Chairman of the Muslim Conservative Forum.

A telephone poll among Jewish community leaders in the other main European countries produced varying responses, as below.

In the Netherlands and Germany, Muslim organisations participate in the national Auschwitz commemoration on 27 January, as do leaders of the Islamic Cultural Centre of Italy (*Centro Culturale Islamico*) and the Italian Muslim Intellectuals Association (*L'Associazione Intellettuali Musulmani Italiani*). In Drancy France, Imam Hassan Chalghoumi has participated in local commemorations, and in Paris Dalil Boubakeur of the central mosque participated in commemorations in 2006. Neither they nor others however have done so since. Many Jewish communities however seem unaware of Muslim participation in their national memorial meetings, although several have reported that individual Muslims may have done so unheralded, perhaps because they were friends with Jewish communal leaders⁷ (Trend 2009).

Muslim Leaders Address the Holocaust

In parallel to the national events, there may be many local events carried out with the encouragement and assistance of central government or its agencies, but it seems that only the UK makes any attempt to record these. Muslim participation in these events seems more likely to reflect local Muslim attitudes to engagement in civil society. Elsewhere, it seems that there is little engagement in local events. Reports from Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany suggest that this is the case.

Personal testimonies by Muslim religious leaders who have visited the concentration camps are still a rarity, but they carry some force. In August 2010, eight American Muslim leaders visited Dachau and Auschwitz under a newly launched scheme by American Jews, funded by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the New Jersey-based Center for Interreligious Understanding. The programme is designed both to educate and to counter Holocaust denial, and at least one of the participants, who had previously called the Holocaust a hoax, spoke of how moved he had been by the overwhelming experience (JTA 2010b).

In the United Kingdom, a prominent Muslim and aspirant leader of the Muslim Council of Britain, Mohammed Amin, reflected on his 2009 visit to Auschwitz in company with five other members of the Muslim Jewish Forum of Greater Manchester on his personal blog. He wrote that

The shadow of the Holocaust has haunted my life. I grew up with images of the concentration camps on television. I was 10 when Adolf Eichmann was captured, tried and hanged, and about 16 when ITV showed 'The Investigation' by Peter Weiss, a play consisting solely of

⁷ Correspondence with Jewish community leaders in France, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, April–May 2010.

readings from the testimonies of prisoners and camp guards from the Frankfurt Auschwitz trial. The impact of the words is shown by the fact that I remember the play more than 40 years later... My younger daughter visited Auschwitz a few years ago as part of a school visit organised by the Holocaust Educational Trust..... The evil that was perpetrated at Auschwitz and the industrial scale of the Holocaust must never be forgotten. Holocaust denial is not limited to neo Nazis, and is sometimes found amongst Muslims. Accordingly I was particularly pleased to learn about the French Muslim website on the Holocaust (Amin 2009).

That Muslims helped Jews under Nazi occupation is noted above and has been emphasised recently by one Muslim community activist in the United Kingdom. Robert Satloff's *Among the Righteous – Lost Stories From the Holocaust's Long Reach into Arab Lands* was the inspiration for British Muslim activist Fiyaz Mughal to initiate and co-write *The Role of Righteous Muslims* specifically for a Muslim audience.

In his introduction, Mughal, who is British born but of Pakistani origin, wrote that “there are many stories of positive Muslim and Jewish interaction, even at the darkest moments in history” and that “Whilst the politics of the Middle East may block such stories out of the public narrative, there is a duty on us all to ensure that they get their rightful place in our social and educational narratives” (Mughal and Rosen 2010).

Teaching the Holocaust

At schools' level however teaching about the Holocaust is part of the national curriculum in many countries, and Muslim children will learn about it whatever the views of their parents. However, as Georges Bensoussan (in the Lost Territories of the Republic) has shown there is evidence from France, and elsewhere, that teachers in schools with large numbers of Muslims, ignore this for fear of antagonising these Muslim pupils (Brenner 2002).

A poll ordered by the French Ministry of Education revealed that only 8% of pupils know the meaning of the word ‘Shoah’, the location of the Vel d’Hiv (the Paris site from which French Jews were deported in 1942), and the number of Jews who died during the War. According to a poll by French newspaper, *Le Figaro*, 37% of high school students think that less than two million Jews were murdered in the Holocaust, and 21% could give no figure at all (ITF 2006c; *Le Figaro* 2008).

In 2006, the ITF sought to learn the state of Holocaust teaching among its member states and issued a questionnaire in which the responsible departments of state were required to record the extent of Holocaust teaching. Clearly each respondent state had different issues to confront in teaching the Holocaust, but some noted that it was mandatory, although it was taught within the context of other subjects in some states.

In the French response it was pointed out that teachers use the Hebrew expression *Shoah* rather than the Holocaust, to point out the specificity of the Jewish genocide, although the massacres of other victims of the Nazis (Gypsies, homosexuals,

Jehovah's witnesses, Slavs) are mentioned as well. While there is currently no obstacle to teaching the Holocaust in France, three major difficulties were pointed out: the lack of time for teaching the subject when teachers have difficulties in finishing the wide programmes in the ninth and the eleventh and twelfth grades; the lack of real academic education for teachers; the opposition and or rejection of a minority of students, mainly Muslim ones in some suburbs, of a class specifically on the Jews and the Holocaust (ITF 2006c).

One initiative designed to address the problem in France, and denial emanating from the Arab world, is The Aladdin Project which translates standard reference books on the Holocaust into Arabic, and which toured 10 Arab cities early in 2010 with the assistance of the French Foreign Ministry. At each of the venues discussion groups were held with readings from Primo Levi's 'If This Is A Man'. The Project's website also contains educational material in Arabic, Farsi and Turkish.⁸

In the Austrian response, it was noted that the "definition of the Holocaust comprises the annihilation of European Jewry, but also the persecution of other groups/minorities (Roma and Sinti, euthanasia) as a result of the racist ideology of National Socialism." Also that "learning and teaching about the Holocaust has to take into consideration the individual narratives that are transmitted within families and different parts of civil society as well as the official narrative until the 1980s that reduced Austria's role during National Socialism to its being the first victim of Nazi Germany" (ITF 2009).

In other words, Austria now confronts its role as a perpetrator, but perhaps still somewhat tentatively. However it too has to contend with some opposition within its Muslim population.

"... the fact that a noteworthy Muslim community lives in Austria becomes a motive to develop adequate teaching methods and to strengthen teachers' methodological skills as well as their knowledge. This has to be seen in the framework of human rights' education and antiracist education" (ITF 2009).

In the Norwegian response, the increasing awareness of Holocaust issues and remembrance is noted and that teacher training is intensified as a consequence, although teaching the subject is not yet mandatory. As with other reporting states, the Holocaust is defined as "the extermination of the Jews by the Nazi regime during the Second World War." In noting the difficulties of teaching the subject, the following is recorded: "Different views on the situation in the Middle East. The current political situation in the Middle East has made it more challenging, but also more important, for teachers to convey the distinction between current events and history" (ITF 2005).

In Switzerland, "the Holocaust is defined as the persecution and extermination of the Jews of Europe by the Nazi regime and its collaborators during the Second World War." Because education and control of the school curricula are decentralised, "the impact of Holocaust education is hardly measurable". But "In a school

⁸ Q&A with Anne-Marie Revcolevschi, President of the Aladdin Project, Projetaladin, 17 March 2010, <http://www.projetaladin.org>.

which is becoming more and more multicultural, the remembrance work mentioned above encounters new difficulties. European history is not always perceived as a common heritage. The unicity of the Holocaust is sometime challenged against the background of current international politics (situation in the Middle East)” (ITF 2006a).

In noting this difficulty the Swiss response goes on to explain that “Pedagogical tools, in order to help students with non-European background and different identities and family histories understand the reality of the Holocaust, have yet to be devised and created” (ITF 2006a).

The German response notes that the Holocaust is taught to every student in German schools and that Holocaust denial is a marginal problem. However, it too states that “there are difficulties and new challenges”, which suggests that teachers there also encounter difficulties with teaching Muslim pupils (ITF 2006b).

Other states which completed the questionnaire reported no difficulties about teaching the Holocaust, other than time constraints and the lack of suitable educational material, a reflection possibly of the absence of Muslims in their countries.

The questionnaire was distributed in 2006 and has not since been updated but the lack of teaching aids is being addressed, in part, by the distribution of teaching aids prepared by the International Task Force, as will the imminent publication of a handbook and guide for teachers on the role of historical sites in Holocaust education and human rights education by the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency.⁹

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, in partnership with the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, have now translated and distributed their books for high school students to eight member states, with a further three to come and this will go some way towards ensuring that the facts of the Holocaust are uniformly taught.¹⁰

Several states also send high school children to Auschwitz Birkenau or other extermination camps. This has happened in the Netherlands, occasionally in Germany and in France and the UK. In Poland, all high school pupils visit Auschwitz which is the Polish national site which commemorates the Nazi mass murder of Poles. But almost all countries have a Holocaust museum or memorial, which students visit at some point.

Both the Netherlands and the UK have Anne Frank centres. In the former, the Anne Frank House also acts as the main centre for anti racist campaigning as well as providing educational material for schools. In the UK, the Anne Frank centre takes mobile exhibitions to schools and public libraries. The Holocaust Educational Trust performs the same task but on a larger scale, as well as taking regular parties of high school students to Auschwitz, as part of a government funded educational programme.¹¹

⁹ <http://www.holocausttaskforce.org/education/guidelines-for-teaching.html>.

¹⁰ <http://www.osce.org/odihr/antisemitism>.

¹¹ See Anne Frank House, Amsterdam, <http://annefrank.org.uk>; Anne Frank Trust, London, <http://www.annefrank.org.uk>; Holocaust Educational Trust, UK, <http://www.het.org.uk>.

Most EU states have Holocaust museums which cater to school parties, and run programmes for students. In all of these, Muslim students will participate. The Second World War has not only been the major element in modern European and World history, but one in which the consequences are a matter for all, but especially Europeans, to live with.

The lessons of the Holocaust carry universal messages. They show what racism, and denigration and demonisation of the other lead to, and young Muslims ignore these lessons at their peril.

Assessment

That Muslims, and particularly Arab Muslims, are interested in the Holocaust is obvious; it is constantly referred to in their media. But the overwhelming consensus is that while it did take place the number of Jewish deaths is exaggerated by Israel and its Zionist supporters. Moreover there is consensus around the idea that Europe promotes Holocaust commemoration to divert attention from Middle East tension and Israel's perceived war against Palestinians.

Holocaust inversion and minimisation in the Muslim world have been examined elsewhere, but Iran's promotion of denial has gathered pace with the launch of the HoloCartoon website, which is clearly aimed at a youthful audience within the Muslim world, and debates on prime time television programmes (Al-Alam TV 2010; JTA 2010a). Attempts to promote denial in Europe are stamped on fairly quickly by the criminal justice agencies, such as that, for example by Dutch Muslims (Reuters 2010).

The reality is that however much Muslims may not wish to participate in Holocaust commemoration it is a defining aspect of European history, and they will have to participate if they wish to live in, and be considered Europeans. It is not possible to force representatives to attend memorial meetings but their children will have to study the Holocaust at some point in their education.

References

- Achcar, Gilbert. 2010a. *The Arabs and the Holocaust: The Arab-Israeli war of narratives*. 1st U.S. ed. New York: Metropolitan Books.
- Achcar, Gilbert. 2010b. Why Holocaust denial is on the rise in the Arab world. International Institute for Research and Education (IIRE). <http://www.iire.org/en/home-mainmenu-1/15-fellows/185-gilbert-achar-why-holocaust-denial>.
- Achcar, Gilbert. 2010c. Arabs have a complex relationship with the Holocaust. Guardian.co.uk. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/may/12/arabs-complex-relationship>.
- Al-Alam TV. 2010. Holocaust denial discussed on Iranian TV: There were no gas chambers. You cannot squeeze 2,000 Jews into 100 square meters. *Memri Tv*. <http://www.memritv.org/clip/en/2474.htm>.
- Amin, Mohammed. 2009. Reflections on visiting Auschwitz. Mohammed Amin's Website. http://www.mohammedamin.com/Community_issues/Reflections_on_visiting_Auschwitz.html.

- Brenner, Emmanuel. 2002. *Les territoires perdus de la République: Antisémitisme, racisme et sexisme en milieu scolaire*. Paris: Mille et une nuits.
- Cooper, Zaki, and John Cooper. 2008. How the Holocaust can unite faiths. *Church Times*. <http://www.churchtimes.co.uk/content.asp?id=50397>.
- Council of Europe. 2009. *Teaching remembrance-education for the prevention of crimes against humanity*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Dalin, David G., and John F. Rothmann. 2008. *Icon of evil: Hitler's Mufti and the rise of radical Islam*, 1st ed. New York: Random House.
- European Parliament. 2005. Resolution on remembrance of the Holocaust, anti-semitism and racism. European Parliament. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P6-TA-2005-0018&language=EN>.
- European Parliament 2009. Resolution on European conscience and totalitarianism. European Parliament. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2009-0213+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>.
- Herf, Jeffrey. 2009. *Nazi propaganda for the Arab World*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- inthenews. 2007. MCB ends Holocaust boycott. December 3.
- ITF. 2005. Norway – Holocaust education report. International Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research. <http://www.holocausttask-force.org/education/holocaust-education-reports/norway-holocaust-education-report.html>.
- ITF. 2006a. Switzerland – Holocaust education report. International Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research. <http://www.holocausttask-force.org/education/holocaust-education-reports/switzerland-holocaust-education-report.html>.
- ITF. 2006b. Germany – Holocaust education report. International Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research. <http://www.holocausttask-force.org/education/holocaust-education-reports/germany-holocaust-education-report.html>.
- ITF. 2006c. France – Holocaust education report. International Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research. <http://www.holocausttask-force.org/education/holocaust-education-reports/france-holocaust-education-report.html>.
- ITF. 2009. Austria – Holocaust education report. International Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research. http://www.holocausttask-force.org/images/itf_data/austrian_national_report_2009.pdf.
- Johnson, Ian. 2010. *A mosque in Munich: Nazis, the CIA, and the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in the West*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- JTA. 2010a. Iranian Holocaust-denying website launched. JTA: The Global News Service of the Jewish People. <http://www.jta.org/news/article-print/2010/08/10/2740430/iranian-holocaust-denying>.
- JTA. 2010b. American Muslim leaders visit concentration camps. http://archive.jta.org/homepage/headlines_export.
- Küntzel, Matthias. 2007. *Jihad and Jew-Hatred: Islamism, Nazism and the roots of 9/11*. New York: Telos Press Pub.
- Le Figaro. 2008. 51% des lycéens ignorent la signification du mot «Shoah», February 29. <http://www.lefigaro.fr/actualites/2008/02/29/01001-20080229ARTFIG00015--des-lyceens-ignorent-la-signification-du-mot-shoah.php>.
- Litvak, Meir, and Esther Webman. 2009. *From empathy to denial: Arab responses to the Holocaust*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Majendie, Paul. 2005. British Muslims to miss Holocaust ceremony, Reuters, London. January 25.
- Mughal, Fiyaz, and Esmond Rosen. 2010. *The role of righteous Muslims*. London: Faith Matters.
- OSCE/ODIHR. 2006. *Education on the Holocaust and on anti-semitism: An overview and analysis of educational approaches*. Warsaw: OSCE/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Right.
- OSCE/ODIHR. 2010. *Holocaust memorial days in the OSCE region. An overview of governmental practices*. Warsaw: OSCE/ODIHR. <http://www.osce.org/odihr/41252>.
- OSCE/ODIHR, and Yad Vashem. 2006. Preparing Holocaust memorial days: Suggestions for educators. OSCE/ODIHR. <http://www.osce.org/odihr/17827>.
- Reuters. 2010. Dutch Muslim group fined over Holocaust cartoon. *Reuters Canada*. <http://ca.reuters.com/article/idCATRE67I3ZT20100819>.

- Satloff, Robert. 2006. *Among the righteous: Lost stories from the Holocaust's long reach into Arab lands*. New York: Public Affairs.
- Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust. 2000. Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust. International Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research. <http://holocausttaskforce.org/about-the-itf/stockholm-declaration.html>.
- Stuart, Hannah. 2009. MCB boycotts Holocaust memorial day. The Centre for Social Cohesion. <http://www.socialcohesion.co.uk/blog/2009/01/mcb-boycotts-holocaust-memorial-day.html>.
- Telhami, Shibley. 2010. *2010 Arab public opinion poll: Conducted by the University of Maryland in conjunction with Zogby International*. College Park: University of Maryland.
- Trend. 2009. Moroccans agree to attend Amsterdam Auschwitz commemoration. *Trend*. January 25. <http://en.trend.az/regions/world/ocountries/1407250.html>.
- UN General Assembly. 2005. Resolution adopted by the general assembly on the Holocaust remembrance (A/RES/60/7). The Holocaust and the United Nations: Outreach Programme. www.un.org/holocaustremembrance/docs/res607.shtml.
- UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). 2007a. Education for Holocaust remembrance. http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=57734&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.
- UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). 2007b. *Holocaust remembrance, resolution 61, records of the general conference*, Paris, 16 Oct–2 Nov 2007. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001560/156046e.pdf>.

The Evolution of Arab Perceptions of the Holocaust

Esther Webman

In February 1945, a then leading Egyptian cultural weekly published a short story, “Mendel ... the book seller”, dedicated to Stephan Zweig. Through his visit to Vienna 20 years after he completed his studies there, the hero of the story, an Egyptian scholar, throws light on the persecution of the Jews during the Second World War. Although he sets the time-frame in World War I, there is a clear implication to World War II. While wandering around the city, he enters haphazardly a coffee house where he used to sit and meet with the “mythological figure,” Yaakov Mendel the book seller, who was there every day, always ready to share at length his knowledge with others. Through the interrogation of an old cloakroom lady, he recounts Mendel’s life, from his arrival in Vienna from the East until his tragic death, and implies details on life under the unmistakably German occupation, the horrors of the concentration camps and the fate of the Jews. After his release, Mendel never returned to his former self, and his physical and mental situation had badly deteriorated, the old lady said. He became strange and repulsive, and was banished from the coffee house. A few days later, he stormed into the place again, bewildered and agitated, and on that night he died. But Mendel left behind a small book that the lady had kept although she does not read and write. She showed the book to the narrator and he identifies it as a prayer book. Filled with remorse for forgetting about Mendel all those years, he begs her to preserve the book because “our friend Mendel would have been happy to know that at least one person from the thousands of those who enjoyed his kindness still remembers him.”¹

¹ *Al-Thaqafa*, 6 February 1945, p. 154. All translations are the author’s unless otherwise noted.

E. Webman (✉)

e-mail: webman@post.tau.ac.il

Another Egyptian literary monthly, a year later published a short essay by Egyptian renowned author Taha Husayn, describing a trip by boat from Alexandria to Beirut via Haifa, where he met displaced Jews on their way to Palestine. They were weak, he wrote, children, girls and women who lost their husbands and all they had, even the slightest hope. Husayn asserted that those immigrants were enforced on the inhabitants of Palestine and that there were other places that could absorb them better than Palestine, but he felt compassion toward them. Seeing them off the boat aroused in him “anger, outrage, pity and sorrow.”²

These two examples of early references to the Holocaust – a term which came to specify the annihilation of European Jews by the Nazis since the 1950s – show on the one hand, a clear empathy with the persecuted Jew and recognition of the universal cultural heritage he left behind, in the first story, and on the other hand, the entanglement of politics with the issue of the Jewish tragedy in the second, despite the still unhidden compassion. The idea that the displaced should return to their original homeland or be absorbed by other states, such as the US or the British Empire was raised by officials in the deliberations on the future of Palestine, as well as in the public discourse. “Undoubtedly, a solution has to be found for the Jewish problem, but colonising Palestine is not a solution to the universal Jewish problem, and it would be unjust to demand solely from the Arabs to solve it at their expense”, was a frequent reaction to the political developments.³

The basic Arabs’ approach derived from the standpoint that the Holocaust does not concern them. It was another people’s tragedy which took place outside the Middle East, and they were not involved in causing it or perpetrating it. Yet, allegedly due to it, they were dealt an injustice and were forced to pay the price for the wrong which befell the Jews. “The price” meant the loss of Palestine to the Jews.⁴ The proximity of events – the end of World War II with the urgent need to solve the “Jewish Problem”, and the establishment of the State of Israel, led to their convergence and the creation of a causality relationship between them,⁵ as well as to the belief that if it was not for the Holocaust, Israel would not have come to exist. Consequently, the Arabs could not separate the attitude toward the Holocaust from their attitude and animosity toward Israel and Zionism. The resistance to the establishment of Israel as the solution to the “Jewish problem” overshadowed their ability and willingness to acknowledge and sympathise with the Jewish tragedy. It was an instinctive reaction which was gradually buttressed by ideological, political and even cultural claims, further crystallised by the intensification of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

² *Al-Katib al-Misri*, 3 June 1946, pp. 3–13.

³ See for example: *Al-Hilal*, January–February 1945, p. 16; *al-Thaqafa*, 20 February 1945, p. 197.

⁴ (Bishara 1995, 54) Bishara’s article fuelled an intense controversy in Israel between Zionist Holocaust researchers and post-Zionist writers. See Michman (1995), Bishara (1996), Michman (1997).

⁵ The role of the Holocaust in facilitating the establishment of Israel preoccupied for years Israeli historiography. For those who claim a direct causality, see Bauer (2001, 242–260), Penkower (1994). For those who dispute this view, see Michman (1993).

This paper explores the Arab perceptions of the Holocaust as they emerged since the end of the Second World War. It focuses on the first 3 years from 1945 to 1948 that laid the foundations of the subsequent discourse; highlights the major themes that typify the Arab discourse on the Holocaust; introduces the changes which occurred in the Arab approach in the mid-1990s; and assesses their impact on the mainstream discourse.

From the End of WWII to the Establishment of Israel

The discourse during the early period from the end of the war to 1948 was unique in its diversity and exposed a whole range of attitudes toward the Holocaust. It clearly shows that the Arabs were aware of the scope of the Jewish tragedy and that there was a flow of information about it. The Arab press, and particularly the Egyptian, covered the events in Europe including the fate of the Jews quite extensively. Reports on Allied advances and the horrors that they encountered in the Nazi camps or the coverage of the Nuremberg Trials were not unusual. The same could be said in reference to the Jews.⁶ Yet, due to the political developments this flow of information had been gradually suppressed to avoid a clash with the war efforts against the Zionist enemy and its state, and Arab preoccupation with the Holocaust increasingly focused on its political ramifications.

Media reports and commentaries were preoccupied with the question of Jewish immigration, and perceived it as a genuine danger to the future of Palestine and the entire Arab region. Yet, they did not deny the existence of a Jewish problem that needed to be resolved. “Undoubtedly, a solution has to be found for the Jewish problem, but colonising Palestine is not a solution to the universal Jewish problem, and it would be unjust to demand solely from the Arabs to solve it at their expense”, Egyptian cultural monthly *al-Hilal* wrote, adding that opposition to Zionism did not contradict Arab compassion to past Jewish plight.⁷

Three basic approaches could be discerned in the references to the Holocaust: One recognised the Jewish tragedy but sought to separate the survivors’ issue from the question of Palestine and present it as an international humanitarian problem, in whose solution the Arabs could take part. Thus, it was possible to express compassion to Jewish pain together with unequivocal rejection of Jewish immigration to Palestine and of Zionist political goals. Such an attitude was congruent with the aspirations of Arab elites to be integrated in the post-war world order and with their awareness of Arab dependency on Britain and the US. The second approach, stemming from the belief that because of the Holocaust Zionism succeeds in realising its national, political aspirations, sought to understate or minimise the meaning of

⁶ For a detailed discussion of this period, see Litvak and Webman (2009, 27–35), Webman (2005, 86–131).

⁷ *Al-Hilal*, January–February 1945, p. 16. See also *al-Thaqafa*, 20 February 1945, p. 197.

the Holocaust by using ambiguous terms or depicting it as a problem of civil discrimination, going as far as partial or complete denial. The third, seeking to de-legitimise Zionism, blamed the Zionist movement or the Jews for what befell them.

The response of the Arab League to the announcement on November 13, 1945, to establish the Anglo-American Committee with the task of formulating recommendations for a solution to the Jewish and Palestine problems was, wittingly or unwittingly, the first case of official implicit denial of the Holocaust. Although the League expressed Arab appreciation of the humanitarian desire to help the Jews of Europe and others who had been persecuted during the Nazi and Fascist period, it warned from dealing “with one case of oppression” by perpetrating another one. “Should Zionism attain its goals it would lead to the dispossession of the Arabs from their homeland and from their national rights,” which is “no less cruel than the oppression of the Jews which the world complains about”. Fortunately, it concluded, the victory of the democracies over Nazism and Fascism would enable the solution of the Jewish problem on a democratic basis and the return of the persecuted Jews to their homelands from which they were expelled by Nazi and Fascist fanatic actions.⁸

Following the publication of the Committee’s recommendations at the end of April 1946, the Egyptian press, while stressing the need to separate between the Palestine and the Jewish problems, agreed that the recommendations meant a “death sentence for Arab Palestine.” Tying the two issues was perceived as a crude political mistake, which proves the indecent intentions of the international community to unjustly impose upon Arab Palestine the burden of the Jewish problem.⁹ In its letter to the Committee, the Arab League stated that Palestine could not absorb new Jewish immigration so long as the immigrants who were sent there for humanitarian reasons sought to transform the Arabs into a minority. It is unjust that those who wish Palestine to absorb Jews refrain from taking Jews to their own land, it added. The letter accused the Zionist movement of exploiting the persecution in Europe for its own political purposes, saying that the Zionists arrived in the Middle East with materialistic western ideas, and with the western and European concepts of colonialism, control and civilisation. Undoubtedly, the Zionists who took advantage of oppression were the last who helped in eliminating that phenomenon.¹⁰ In other statements and commentaries the fate of the Jews was reduced to mere expulsion from their homeland that was even less serious than the anticipated dispossession of the Palestinian Arabs. Moreover, doubt was cast as to the scope of oppression, which the world “complains” about.¹¹ Both arguments would become central themes in the future Arab argumentation.

⁸ *Al-Ahram*, 27 November, 7 December 1945.

⁹ *Al-Ahram*, 3, 4, 5, 11, 12 July 1946; ‘Abdallah ‘Inan in *al-Thaqafa*, 28 May 1946, p. 2, *ibid.*, 9 July 1946, pp. 759–760, 25 February 1947, p. 2; Qutb (1947).

¹⁰ *Al-Ahram*, 3 March 1946.

¹¹ See a similar insinuation by Michel Kafuri who charged the Jews with exploiting “the persecutions attributed to some states against the Jews living in their midst during the war” (Kafuri 1947, 19).

UNSCOP's recommendations published on 31 August 1947, calling for the partition of Palestine into two states – a Jewish and an Arab, and emphasising the humanitarian aspect of the Arab-Jewish dilemma and the difficulties in finding a solution to a problem relating to humanitarian issues and political rights were met with unequivocal rejection by the Arabs. Several motifs were intertwined in their arguments, most importantly among them was the accusation of Zionism of inflating the scope of the persecution of the Jews in Europe to justify the claim over Palestine and extort universal conscience; and the argument that a Jewish state would not provide security to the Jews in general and to Middle Eastern Jewry in particular.¹² The recommendations were seen as “a further violation of the principles of justice and [legitimate] right”, and a “mark of disgrace on the forehead of human justice.” Could the world, which fought the Nazi tyranny and founded the United Nations, agree “to the results of that awful partition,” wondered Egyptian writer Ahmad Hamza.¹³ Christian writer Nicola Haddad accused the Jews of taking advantage of the humanism and compassion of the Christian Europeans following the recent persecutions, which he defined as expulsion and expropriation of their property.¹⁴ With a few exceptions maintaining that Jews had lived harmoniously with the Arabs in the past, writers ceased to express any compassion for past Jewish suffering.

Another motif that emerged already during this period and became more prominent after the Arab defeat in the war in Palestine in May 1948 was the equation between the fate of the Jews and that of the Palestinians, thereby minimising the scope of the Holocaust and transforming its victims into criminals equal to or worse than the Nazis. “Imposing a Jewish state on Palestine exceeds in its tyranny and aggression the greatest crimes carried out by the Axis states,” journalist Muhammad ‘Awad Muhammad contended in April 1945.¹⁵ An *al-Ahram* editorial, which appealed to Middle Eastern Jews wondered if anyone could imagine a time in which the Jews “who had been subjected for generations to harshest oppressions and tyrannies” would do the same to others. The Zionist efforts to dislodge people from their homes and disperse them “constitute the same disaster, which the Jews had experienced.” The whole world, the writer went on, denounced German Aryan racism that shed human blood, particularly of the Jews. Why then does Zionism seek to operate as the Germans did and implement their methods in Palestine, which would lead to the perdition of a people, its deportation and destruction, he posed.¹⁶

By 1948, compassion toward the Jews had faded in both the official and public discourses, reinforcing the notions that the Arabs were not responsible for the

¹² *Al-Ahram*, 3, 29, 30, 31 August, 1, 2, 9 September, 3, 5, 9, 29 October, 25 November; *al-Misri*, 9, 10 September, 25 November 1947; *Arab News Bulletin*, No. 43, 44 (8, 22 August 1947) – CO 733/482/1/9, 11; *Arab News Bulletin*, No. 46 (19 September 1947) – CO 733/482/1/15; *Liwa' al-Islam*, November 1947, p. 4, December 1947, p. 4.

¹³ *Al-Ahram*, 3, 29–31 August, 1, 2 September, 2 December 1947; *al-Thaqafa*, 25 November 1947, p. 1193; Ahmad Hamza, *Liwa' al-Islam*, November 1947, p. 4.

¹⁴ *Al-Risala*, 22 December 1947, pp. 1395–1396.

¹⁵ *Al-Thaqafa*, 10 April 1945, p. 391.

¹⁶ *Al-Ahram*, 14 November 1945, 11 January 1946. See also Rifat (1947, 98–99).

Holocaust and that if they would bear its brunt, it would be a tragedy no less serious than the Holocaust. In the coming years all the themes which were identified in this formative period were developed and came to typify the Arab discourse on the Holocaust.

Although they did not constitute a systematic coherent narrative, one can discern a trend moving from recognition of the event as a human disaster which the Arabs, and especially the Egyptians, were ready to share its burden, to alienation, relativisation and denial. The diversity of voices was substituted by a more monolithic discourse that increasingly utilised the Holocaust as a tool in rhetoric of conflict. Unlike the earlier matter-of-fact reports during 1944–1945 about the horrors that were revealed by the liberation of the Nazi camps and by the Nuremberg trials, the ensuing references to the Holocaust became highly charged and their point of departure was that of conflict and confrontation between the Arabs and the Zionists. The Holocaust was no longer viewed as a neutral fact but as a catalyst to a political course of events and a major justification for the enemy.

The Evolution of the Major Themes of Holocaust Representation

References to the Holocaust after 1948 were made in various contexts, but it was not until the signing of the reparations agreement between West Germany and Israel, in September 1952, that the Holocaust came again to the fore, giving prominence to the theme of Zionist and Israeli exploitation of the Holocaust for material gains. Almost 10 years later, with the capture of Adolf Eichmann in May 1960 and through his trial and execution on 1 June 1962, the Holocaust was again a major issue on the Arab public political agenda, reinforcing the equation of Zionism with Nazism and the theme of the alleged Zionist-Nazi collaboration.¹⁷ These affairs highlighted the correlation which exists between the nature of political developments or the historical context and the themes of Holocaust representation. The attempt to explain the Nazi atrocities and the long Jewish history of persecutions led to the justification of the Holocaust¹⁸; while in the discussion of the Palestine problem the equation of the Holocaust with the Palestinian tragedy as well as the conflation of Zionist and Nazi conduct are prominent themes.¹⁹

The Holocaust was rarely raised as an independent subject in the Arab public discourse since WWII up until the mid 1990s, but was frequently invoked, explicitly or implicitly, in the writings on and discussions of historical and political issues

¹⁷ For a detailed discussion of these affairs see Webman (2005, 137–215). On the Eichmann affair, see also Litvak and Webman (2009, 93–130).

¹⁸ See for example: Allubah (1954, 53, 128, 133, 189), Qutb (1989, 37), Al-Ghazali (1957, 168); *al-Ahram*, 30 December 1948; *al-Muqtataf*, 1 June 1950.

¹⁹ See for example: *al-Ahram*, 19 September and 14 October 1948; *al-Misri*, 7 December 1952; Saab (1965, 9).

such as the Jewish history and the Jewish problem, the Palestine problem, and the Zionist enterprise. There was no difference between the academic and the official or popular discourses reflected in an ever-growing volume of controversial literature on Jewish history, Zionism, and the Palestine problem. They did not introduce new insights but instead reinforced previous themes. Yet, there was a shift of emphasis from the justification claims to all variations of denial – a trend which also typified western revisionist literature (Lipstadt 1993, 4). Soviet (anti-Zionist) and revisionist discourses had an impact on the development of the Arab Holocaust discourse, especially after the Six Day War of 1967, when the Soviet presence in the Middle East was at its peak, and Holocaust deniers became more outspoken. The 1967 war brought in its wake yet another development: for the first time in 19 years it created a direct encounter between Palestinians and Israelis, which reinforced the unique traits of the Palestinian Holocaust discourse.

Most illustrative is Ghassan Kanafani's novel *Returning to Haifa*, written after the Six Day War, describing the journey of two Palestinian refugees, a couple from Ramallah Sa'id and Safiyya, to their home in Haifa in search of their son Khaldun, who, as a baby, had been left behind in their flight in 1948. Arriving in Haifa, they discover that the house has been occupied by Holocaust survivors, Miriam and Efrat Goshen, who had also adopted and raised their son. The encounter between the widow Miriam, whose husband died in the war of 1956,²⁰ and the Palestinian couple raises several dominant themes in the Palestinian discourse on the Holocaust: acknowledgement of the historical event, comparison between the Jewish and the Palestinian suffering, and the portrayal of the Israeli soldier as being ruthless as the Nazi soldier. It was the first time that a novel presented a meeting between a Palestinian and an Israeli Jew, "not on the battlefield but in a normal room, where each of them puts forth his point of view and discusses it with the other" (Riley and Harlow 2000, 25)²¹. It is significant that this Jew was a Holocaust survivor, who had the potential of identifying with the Palestinian agony in view of his or her own experience.

The representation of Miriam stems from the awareness that the Nazi horrors indeed took place. She arrived in Haifa with her husband on the eve of the establishment of the state, and she is a decent, sensitive, and humane person. She is presented in contrast to the Israeli soldier. Indeed, she was perplexed by the behaviour of the "Haganah" members, whom she saw throwing a body of an Arab child onto a truck like a piece of wood, reminding her of her father's death in Auschwitz and her young brother shot dead at the hands of German soldiers. Those thoughts, which she

²⁰In October 1956, in the wake of the Egyptian new revolutionary regime's demand for the immediate evacuation of British army forces still posted in Egypt and the fear that as a result passage in the Suez Canal will be threatened, Britain and France, joined by Israel, launched an attack on Egypt to preserve their interests in the region. The war was known also as the Suez War and, in Israeli historiography, as the Sinai War. Israel conquered Sinai but evacuated it after 6 months as a result of strong American pressure. See Safran (1969), Tal (2001).

²¹Quoting from Mansur (1972, 220).

never disclosed to anyone, and the arrogance exhibited by Sa'ïd and Safiyya's soldier son, who was completely immersed in Israeli culture and rejected his biological parents, bring immediately to mind the recurring theme in Arab Holocaust representation: the equation of the Israeli soldier and the Nazi soldier and, in a broader sense, of Zionism and Nazism (Kanafani et al. 2000, 147–196).²²

The equation of Zionism with Nazism was reinforced after the 1967 War with the Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank and the shift in Israel's image from underdog to Goliath. Soviet propaganda, the European Left's criticism of Israel, and the 1975 UN Resolution, defining Zionism as a kind of racism, intensified the use of this motif for the de-legitimisation of Israel and Zionism. In 1997, the Egyptian expert on Jewish studies 'Abd al-Wahhab al-Masiri provided a pseudo-scientific foundation to this theme in his book *Zionism, Nazism and the End of History*, in which he claimed that the resemblance between the two movements stemmed from their being natural offsprings of western civilisation. Nazism was not an aberration and Auschwitz was not a paradigm of "a civilisational rupture", as western scholars contend, but an inevitable development of western civilisation. Barbarism and genocides were perpetrated in the past in the name of this civilisation by different nations in different places in the world, and thus the annihilation of the Jews and others during WWII was not a unique historical event but another link in a chain of genocides (Al-Wahhab al-Masiri 1997, 24–48). Masiri's criticism was clearly influenced by the criticism of modernism and western culture raised in the west in the wake of the Holocaust, and by the revisionists' rejection of the uniqueness of the Holocaust.²³

Arabs and particularly Palestinians accused Israel and Zionism of ignoring the Palestinian tragedy, despite what befell them in the Nazi era. Jews were expected to be more sensitive to the suffering of others since they themselves were subjected to horrible sufferings. Moreover, they believed that one wrong had been righted by another wrong. The Nazi persecutions in Europe were said to be exploited for the justification of the persecution and the uprooting of another people. No one can claim that it was the Arabs' duty to allow immigration of Jews to Palestine in view of their suffering, wrote Egyptian sociologist Rashid al-Barrawi. Sympathy feelings "do not provide a special moral right to Palestine" (Al-Barrawi 1948, 40–42).

The Palestinians strove to gain recognition of their tragedy, with all it entails in rights for self-determination and restoration of justice. This striving for victimhood status constituted the backbone of the narrative from which various motifs developed, starting with the equation of the extent and gravity of the tragedies through denying the tragedy of "the other" and turning him from victim to perpetrator.

Several major themes typified Holocaust representations in the Arab public discourse:

1. Empathy and acknowledgement;
2. Justification;

²² See also Somekh (1996, 238), Elad-Bouskila and Ha-Qalush (2005, 42, 45).

²³ On European ethnocentrism toward "the other" after the Enlightenment, see Pecora (1992).

3. Denial;
4. Alleged collaboration between Zionism and Nazism in the extermination of European Jews;
5. Equation between Nazism and Zionism, and between Israeli policy toward the Palestinians and Nazi policies toward the Jews;
6. Relativisation;
7. Inversion of the victim/perpetrator role, and the representation of the Palestinians as the real victims of the Holocaust.²⁴

Critical Voices in a Promising Era of a Peace Process

Holocaust representation in the Arab public discourse did not change until the mid 1990s, despite the vicissitudes of the conflict and the internal, inter-Arab and international political arenas. The collapse of the Soviet Block in the early 1990s had an impact on world affairs, including the Middle East. The emerging notion of a new world order; the signing of the Israeli-Palestinian accords in 1993 and the 1994 Israeli-Jordanian peace agreement served as pretext for a revision of the Arab traditional approach towards the Jewish Holocaust among liberal Arab intellectuals. Criticising the prevalent Arab perceptions of the Holocaust, they called for the unequivocal recognition of the suffering of the Jewish people, which eventually would lead to the recognition of the Palestinian tragedy by the Israelis and facilitate reconciliation and coexistence between the two peoples. The gist of this new approach is the acknowledgement of the Holocaust as an undisputed historical fact, a crime against humanity, and the separation of its human aspects from its political repercussions. This discourse marked a significant turning point in the Arab discussion of the Holocaust, expanding its dimensions and legitimising contesting views.

The new approach was affected by the attitudes to the Holocaust in the West and its growing significance in western culture, as Holocaust denial and other motifs of Holocaust representation in the traditional Arab discourse were reinforced by western and Soviet literature. The propagators of the new approach, such as the late Palestinian professor for comparative English literature, Edward Said, liberal Lebanese writer and editor of *al-Hayat* daily, Hazim Saghia, and others, lived in the West and are highly conversant with its culture and values. They genuinely advocate a change in the Arab attitude toward the Holocaust and do not deny its uniqueness, although most of them fail to isolate the political dimension from their discourse despite their declared aspiration to do so.

²⁴ For further details, see Litvak and Webman (2009), Achcar (2010c), Bishara (1995), Harkabi (1972, 254–258), Lewis (1997, 203–218). For Arab publications dealing with the relations between Zionism and Nazism. See for instance Faris (1978), Mahmud (1971), Al-Wahhab al-Masiri (1997).

Although there were few Arab intellectuals and activists, such as Israeli author and communist activist Emile Habibi and Palestinian Christian theologian Naim Stifan Ateek, who openly recognised the Jewish tragedy and its importance to the Jews before the 1990s (Habibi 1986; Ateek 1990; Wicken 2006), only the debate triggered in 1997 aroused a wide range reaction.

Said and Saghiya challenged the notion of “the Holocaust does not concern us.” Saghiya contended in his book *Defending Peace* that this notion resulted from a limited understanding of European history and modernity, laziness, lack of curiosity and a certain degree of opportunism. He accused the Palestinians of concentrating on the adverse political dimensions of the Jewish tragedy, and failing to identify with the human aspect of the Jewish tragedy or show any sympathy (Saghiya 1997, 63–69)²⁵. The Arabs, claimed Saghiya, could surely not be blamed for the Holocaust but as members of the international community, they should not exclude themselves from responsibility for the calamity. In order to understand western and world sympathy toward Israel, the Arabs should try to understand the Holocaust, he insisted, and should show more sensitivity and understanding of the Jewish tragedy in order to gain worldwide respect and sympathy for the Palestinian tragedy. Mutual sensitivity would help overcome the barriers on the road to peace.²⁶

Edward Said as well linked the attitude toward the Holocaust to the general Arab political and social situation. “The history of the modern Arab world – with all its political failures, its human rights abuses, its stunning military incompetence, its decreasing production, the fact that, alone of all modern peoples, we have receded in democratic and technological and scientific development – is disfigured by a whole series of outmoded and discredited ideas, of which the notion that the Jews never suffered and that the Holocaust is an obfuscatory confection created by the elders of Zion is one that is acquiring too much, far too much, currency,” he explained.²⁷ He called for an act of comprehension that “guarantees one’s humanity and resolve that such a catastrophe should never be forgotten and never again recur.” Seeking bases for coexistence, Said claimed that a link exists between what happened to the Jews in World War II and the catastrophe of the Palestinian people, and unless this connection is recognised there would be no foundation for coexistence. He insisted that he does not attach conditions to the comprehension of and compassion for the Jewish tragedy, however, he believed that “such an advance in consciousness by Arabs ought to be met by an equal willingness for compassion and comprehension on the part of the Israelis and Israel’s supporters.”²⁸ The recognition of the realities of the Holocaust, he added, does not constitute “a blank check for Israelis to abuse us,

²⁵ Faysal Jalul, a Lebanese journalist living in Paris agreed with this criticism in his review of Saghiya’s book (Jalul 1997). See also Kassir (1998).

²⁶ Saghiya (1997, 63–94), *Ha`aretz*, 21 March 1997; *al-Hayat*, 10, 14, 15, 18, 28 November, 18 December 1997.

²⁷ *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 25 June, *al-Hayat*, 30 June 1998.

²⁸ *Al-Hayat*, 5 November, *al-Ahram Weekly*, 6 November 1997; *Ha`aretz*, 20 February, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, August–September 1998.

but as a sign of our humanity, our ability to understand history, our requirement that our suffering be mutually acknowledged.”²⁹

The motif of mutual recognition of the Jewish and the Palestinian tragedies as a paramount element in any reconciliation between the two peoples is central to this approach. It was even formally expressed in the official Palestinian People’s Appeal on the 50th anniversary of the *Nakba* published in May 1998, which stated that “while we extend a compassionate recognition of the unspeakable Jewish suffering during the horror of the holocaust [sic], we find it unconscionable that the suffering of our people be denied or even rationalised.”³⁰ A historical reconciliation does not only mean recognition of past suffering and its importance to the collective memory of each people but requires the creation of a new narrative which takes into account the histories of both peoples, and necessitates the assimilation of the history of each other and of their respective tragedies (Khalidi 1999, 55).³¹

Another dominant theme in this new approach is the universalisation of the Holocaust. The lessons from the Holocaust, it had been argued, became universal moral values that serve as a bulwark for democracies against the threats of fundamentalism, extremism and racism, which target Jews and Muslims alike. The increasing recognition of the Holocaust’s significance, the expansion of sphere of memory and the participation of other peoples in it, point to the expropriation of the Holocaust from the limited Jewish possession, and its assuming a meaning and a message for all humanity. Only this broader perception of the Holocaust by the Jews accompanied by a similar recognition by the Arabs can lead to a real reconciliation in the Middle East. In this theme as well, it had been emphasised that the acknowledgement of the Holocaust “does not free the Jewish state or the Jews of accountability” for the Palestinian tragedy. Any denial of the Palestinian rights “will be tantamount to an infringement of the sanctity of the Holocaust, which has become a yardstick for universalistic values.”³²

The new Arab approach gradually gained the support of additional Arab intellectuals and writers, and evoked intensive debates on the Holocaust in the Arab media, which proved that the readiness to accept the occurrence of the Holocaust is gradually infiltrating into the mainstream Arab discourse, although not necessarily acknowledging its dimensions, uniqueness and meaning. These debates were triggered by various events and issues since the first half of 1998, such as: the controversy over the proposed visit of Arafat to the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington in January 1998; Roger Garaudy’s trial in France in February that year and his subsequent tour to the Middle East as well as the Pope’s document “We Remember: Reflections on the Shoah” of 16 March³³; the restitution of Jewish

²⁹ *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 25 June, *al-Hayat*, 30 June 1998.

³⁰ The Palestinian People’s Appeal on the 50th Anniversary of the Catastrophe “Al-Nakba.”

³¹ See also *al-Hayat*, 18 December 1997, 15 May 1998; *al-Ahram Weekly*, 14 January 1999.

³² *Al-Hayat*, 18 December 1997. The article entitled “Universalizing the Holocaust or breaking the Jewish monopoly over it,” gained them the “Common Ground Award for Journalism in the Middle East” in 1999 (*Ha’aretz*, 21 February 2000). See also Bishara (1996, 104), Jayyusi (1998, 33), Kronemeijer (2006, 46–50).

³³ For a discussion of the Arab response to these issues, see Webman (2000, 19–21).

property (Litvak and Webman 2009, 350–356); and the international initiatives to commemorate the Holocaust in 2005 (Porat and Stauber 2005; Litvak and Webman 2009, 362–366).

The Counter Reaction to the New Discourse

The new approach ushered in, almost immediately, a counter reaction, exacerbated by the outbreak of the al-Aqsa intifada at the end of September 2000. Although there was a greater awareness to the growing international Holocaust consciousness, this awareness “has boomeranged with a vengeance”, as renowned historian Robert Wistrich said in an interview relating to antisemitism in Europe (Roumani and Rubin 2007). It not only led to analogies and false equations but to active ideational denial.

Holocaust denial was introduced vigorously and presented as essential to the Palestinian cause. Most outspoken was Palestinian-Jordanian Islamist Ibrahim ‘Allush, who repeatedly explained the necessity of denial. With a group of Arab intellectuals, he organised on May 13, 2001, a convention in Amman to discuss “what happened to the revisionist historians’ conference in Beirut?”³⁴ In contrast to the Beirut conference, where all the speakers were to have been Western Holocaust revisionists, the principal participants in the Amman meeting (150–200 participants in all) were Arab journalists and members of anti-normalisation professional associations. The two main speakers were the Amman-based Lebanese journalist Hayat ‘Atiyya and the Jordanian journalist ‘Arafat Hijjazi. ‘Atiyya (who appeared 2 days later on an al-Jazeera talk show dealing with the question “Is Zionism Worse than Nazism?”) emphasised the alleged parallels between Zionism and Nazism and argued that historical revisionism was not an ideology but a well-documented research project. Hijjazi dealt with common themes of Holocaust denial. The speakers also praised Roger Garaudy’s contribution to popularizing “revisionism”, outlined the speech Robert Faurisson had intended to deliver at the Beirut conference and proposed establishing an Arab Committee of Historical Revisionism.³⁵

Although Arabs had embraced Holocaust denial in the past, the meeting in Amman was exceptional in revealing the open cooperation between Arabs and revisionists. ‘Allush, who directs the *Free Arab Voice* site, asserted in an interview to the *Journal of Historical Review* that Arabs should be interested in the Holocaust and should take an active role in Holocaust revisionism. He argued that “most Arab

³⁴ A revisionist conference scheduled to convene in Beirut in March 2001 that was cancelled at the last moment by the Lebanese PM Rafiq al-Hariri. See Litvak and Webman (2009, 357–360).

³⁵ Free Arab Voice Online (FAV), 15, 28 April 2001; JP, 17, 23 April, 22 May 2001; al-Safir, 20 April 2001; Jordan Times Online, 15 May 2001; al-Hayat al-Jadida, 15 May 2001; al-Jazira TV, 15 May 2001 – MEMRI, dispatch no. 225, 6 June 2001; Middle East News Online, 16 May 2001; AZAR, 18 May 2001–MSANEWS, 18 May 2001.

regimes and leaders would not dare embrace “Holocaust” revisionism openly,” but “the Arab world is fertile ground for revisionist seeds” (The Journal for Historical Review 2001).³⁶ Notorious for his ideational support of Holocaust denial, ‘Allush defined the Holocaust as “an invented lie” and “a global ideology” of the Zionist movement. Jews died in WWII like the other 45 million who perished due to the war, hunger and disease. If we accept that Jews were exterminated in gas chambers, as a result of a predetermined policy that caused the annihilation of six million out of 15 million Jews, then we acknowledge the “amazing Holocaust story.” Each of these three claims, he concluded, was refuted by revisionist scholars.³⁷

Syrian president Bashar al-Asad also doubted the Holocaust in an interview with American journalist Charlie Rose aired on 27 March 2006 on PBS, claiming that many people in the Middle East believe that the West exaggerated it. He admitted that massacres of the Jews happened during WWII, but that he does not have “a clue how many were killed or how they were killed, by gas, by shooting... we don’t know.” The problem, he said, “is not the number of those killed but rather how they use the Holocaust,” and “what do the Palestinians have to do with the Holocaust to pay the price.” On another occasion, in an interview to an Italian paper in December 2006, he commented that Europe suffers from a Holocaust complex.³⁸

But it was Iranian president Mahmud Ahmadinejad who engaged in crude denial since he came to office in June 2005 that ignited further debates in the Arab media on the issue.³⁹ His statements reflected a new Iranian deliberate state policy aiming at disseminating Holocaust denial (Litvak 2006, 2010). Following the cartoon contest that he initiated earlier in February in response to the Danish cartoons on Prophet Muhammad, he convened a conference on the Holocaust on 11–12 December 2006. The conference attracted the regular array of western deniers, French professor Robert Faurisson, American white supremacist David Duke, French writer Georges Thiel, Head of the Adelaide Institute in Australia Frederick Toben. Sixty-seven participants submitted papers in the two-day gathering, which was allegedly supposed to discuss the Holocaust in a free atmosphere without “preconceived ideas”, on a range of subjects including the nature of antisemitism, Jews in Iran and Islam, Zionism, gas chambers, freedom of speech, and how the law treats Holocaust deniers. The deliberations were not open to the media, and Arab papers did not report extensively on the conference but reacted to it in numerous editorials.

The Arab responses were mixed and ranged from full support and total denunciation on moral as well as practical grounds. Articles in Syrian papers found the conference

³⁶ See also The Free Arab Voice Online (FAV) (2001a, b) and his series of articles in *al-Sabil*, 1–22 May 2001.

³⁷ *Al-Sabil*, 1 February 2005. See also an interview with ‘Allush aired on al-Jazeera TV on 23 August 2005 (MEMRI 2005).

³⁸ *Ynet*, 28 March 2006; *Ha’aretz*, 29 March 2006; *Jerusalem Post*, 15 December 2006.

³⁹ See for example Khalid al-Hurub, *al-Hayat*, 12 January 2006; ‘Izzat al-Qamhawi, *al-Quds al-Arabi*, 14 January 2006; ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Rashid, *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, 17 January 2006; Mustafa al-Faqi, *al-Ahram*, 24 January 2006; Mufiq Mahadin, *al-Arab al-Yawm*, 26 January 2006.

a serious and courageous attempt to break the siege on researchers to expose the truth about the Holocaust.⁴⁰ ‘Ali Mahmud Fakhru contested what he defined as “the sanctification” of the Holocaust by Zionism, asserting that Arabs do not deny the Nazi persecution of the Jews, Slovaks, Russians and Gypsies. But they should act “hand in hand with the noble authors and thinkers in the West who demand removing the mythical sanctity from the Jewish tragedy”. If the West wants to get acquainted with a similar tragedy, he went on to say, it should send envoys to Palestine to witness how Zionism, the “new Nazism” kills our children, wives and elderly.⁴¹ Ahmad Abuzina as well accused the Jews in *al-Watan* of making the Holocaust an icon and hence he was not surprised by the questioning of the Holocaust at the conference, and hoped that it usher a change in its perception by the world.⁴² Hazim Hashim in Egyptian opposition paper *al-Wafd*, which claimed that Israel turned the Holocaust into a tool of political and economic extortion, praised Iran for being the only Muslim country which succeeded in convening such a forum. A similar view was raised by Muntasir al-Zayyat, an Egyptian Islamist lawyer in Qatari *al-Raya*.⁴³

Several writers rejected the conference for tactical reasons, considering it as harming the Arab cause. Denying the tragedy of the enemy will not benefit the Arabs, on the contrary it might reach an opposite result and serve Israel’s interests.⁴⁴ Perusing the subjects of the lectures, *al-Akhbar* editor Ibrahim Sa’dah wrote, reveals vague topics that are all supposed to approve Ahmadinejad’s views. Elias Harfoush in *al-Hayat* doubted the advisability of holding such a conference, which he said will only corroborate the evidence against those who deny the Holocaust. It would have been more appropriate for the Iranian government, if it wants to bring the Palestinians closer to achieving their rights, to discuss how the Zionist movement exploited the Holocaust to justify the establishment of the Jewish state. “When national issues are turned into political commodities that are propagated at the expense of truth”, he concluded, “the goal is to sell the causes in popular markets, where science and knowledge are the last concern of the masses”.⁴⁵

Arab Knesset members, Arab Israeli lawyer Khalid Mahamid,⁴⁶ Palestinian activist Mahmud al-Safadi,⁴⁷ shaykh Kamil Rayan, one of the leaders of the more moderate southern faction of the Islamist movement in Israel,⁴⁸ to name but a few, also condemned the conference and accused the Iranian president of doing a

⁴⁰ *Tishrin*, 20 December 2006; *al-Thawra*, 22 December 2006.

⁴¹ *Al-Quds al-‘Arabi*, 14 December 2006.

⁴² *Al-Watan* (Qatar), 17 December 2006.

⁴³ *Al-Wafd*, 15 December 2006; *al-Raya*, 16 December 2006.

⁴⁴ *Al-Safir*, 14 December 2006; *al-Akhbar*, 18 December 2006; *Tishrin*, 21 December 2006; *al-Hayat*, 31 December 2006.

⁴⁵ *Al-Akhbar*, 12 December 2006; *al-Hayat*, 13 December 2006.

⁴⁶ *International Herald Tribune*, *Ha’aretz*, 17 November 2006; *Jerusalem Post*, 10 December 2006; *The New York Sun*, 13 December 2006.

⁴⁷ *Le Monde*, 4 December 2006; *The Independent*, 10 December 2006.

⁴⁸ *Jerusalem Post*, 12 December 2006; *Ha’aretz*, 17 December 2006.

disservice to popular struggles in general to the Palestinian cause in particular. Outright denunciation of the conference was expressed particularly by writers who saw it as part of the growing influence of Iran and of Islamist thought in the Middle East. This is the conference, “of Arab and Muslim Neturei Karta (ultra-Orthodox Jews),” wrote Nazir Majali, an Arab Israeli journalist and proponent of Arab unconditional recognition of the Holocaust. Iran did not gather this gathering out of its concern for scientific historical research. It seeks to undermine the foundations of the state of Israel not because of an Iranian-Israeli conflict but for totally different reasons, he went on to say.⁴⁹ Palestinian writer Hasan Khidr was even blunt in mocking Ahmadinejad’s academic pretensions in Palestinian daily *al-Ayyam*. The “ignorant, reactionary and backward” Arab discourse, which typified previous decades, he lamented, is becoming at present “authentic and honourable”. The Holocaust is a fact that ought to be accepted. There are countless evidences that testify to it. The problem is the instrumentalisation of the Holocaust by the European Right which strives to revive the ideologies that caused the death of millions, by Israel which tries to exploit it to justify its colonial policy and occupation, and by Arab and Iranian fundamentalism which use it in a battle they want to turn into a clash of civilisation.⁵⁰ Lebanese daily *al-Safir* lashed at the Iranians for dealing with the denial of the Holocaust and thus providing further justification to Israel to enhance its power for defending itself. He also reminded the Arabs that according to Nazi ideology they were considered even more despicable than the Jews.⁵¹

Wondering about the achievements of the Tehran conference Palestinian scholar Khalid al-Hurub in Qatari daily *al-Sharq*, reached the conclusion that it only brought about more troubles to Iran, gave further justification for Israel to strike at it, and “lent an inhuman image to the Muslims in the world by declaring cooperation with all the racists worldwide”. Ahmadinejad’s denial of the Holocaust confirms the attribution of “genocidal extremism” to the Arabs and Muslims, and gives Israel an endorsement to its sense of victimhood, and sustained it over long decades despite its crimes against Arabs and Palestinians. Al-Hurub also made several remarks on the Holocaust, which illustrate the complexities of Holocaust representation in the Arab world in recent years. When dealing with this subject, he suggested, “we should stick to our humanism”, acknowledge and condemn the extermination of the Jews by Hitler during WWII. There should be an absolute separation between the attitude toward the Nazi crime and the position on Israel and Zionism. The denial of the Holocaust by Arabs and Muslims or the attempts to prove this claim scientifically and historically is beyond their priorities and capabilities. Denouncing

⁴⁹ *Ha`aretz*, 19 December 2006.

⁵⁰ *Al-Ayyam*, 12 December 2006.

⁵¹ *Al-Safir*, 14 December 2006. For additional criticism of the conference, see *al-Hayat*, 14 December 2006; *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, 16, 21 December 2006; *al-Siyasa*, 17 December 2006; *al-Ahram Weekly*, 21 December 2006; *al-Quds al-`Arabi*, 22 December 2006.

the Holocaust is a clear humanistic stance that does not affect the just Palestinian problem and does not lend legitimacy to Israel and its crimes, he concluded.⁵²

The diversification of the discourse on the Holocaust, which had been exposed in the reactions to the conference in Tehran, was also manifested in the responses to international Holocaust Memorial Day, marked on 27 January since 2005. Yet, the major motifs which typified the discourse remained in tact. The Egyptian parliament refused unanimously to commemorate the event. According to Kuwaiti daily *al-Qabas*, Egyptian MPs, who considered the UN resolution as not binding for the Arabs, clarified that Egypt was not concerned with this celebration and that dozens of other genocides committed by Israel against the Arabs should have been commemorated. The Muslim Council of Britain as well continued its adamant boycott of the UK's National Holocaust Day.⁵³ Mustafa Hajju Kharma reiterated in Islamist weekly *al-Sabil*, the traditional Arab approach to the Holocaust, contending that the Holocaust "does not concern us Arabs and Muslims", especially since the perpetrators admitted it and legislated laws that incriminate whoever doubts it in any way. "What concerns us...is that the Jews are being compensated for the suffering done to them by the Europeans on the account of the Arabs and Muslims". A similar view from a different angle was also voiced in *al-Quds al-'Arabi* by Muhammad Na'ma, the publisher of the Paris-based "Western Orbits" which specialises in the translation of western thought into Arabic, who called notwithstanding for reforming the Arab discourse on the Holocaust. Contending that Nazism and Fascism were rooted in European history and did not emerge in a void, he acknowledged the persecution of the Jews and the Holocaust, but accused the Jews and particularly the Israelis of reproducing the western racist ideology and deeds from which they suffered against the Palestinians. He warned westerners and Israelis that "sinking in a routine of remembering the past (the Holocaust)" and reinforcing its generalisation might lead to the obfuscation of the link between the memory and the event. There would be no remedy to the wounds if the West remains blind to all its crimes in the last century and as long as the Zionists continue to ignore their responsibility to their victims, the Palestinian people.⁵⁴

Conclusions

The outbreak of al-Aqsa *intifada* at the end of September 2000, the stalling peace negotiations and the growing antagonism between Israelis and Palestinians curtailed the continued development of the new approach. The voices propagating it were in

⁵² *Al-Sharq*, 4 January 2007. For similar views see *al-Hayat*, 14 January 2007; *New York Review of Books*, 15 February 2007; [www.iran-emrooz.net /index.php?/news1/12081](http://www.iran-emrooz.net/index.php?/news1/12081), 20 February 2007; *Tikkun*, August 2007.

⁵³ European Jewish Congress, 18 January 2007 – www.eurojewcong.org/ejc/print.php?id_article=284; *Al-Qabas*, 30 January 2006.

⁵⁴ *Al-Sabil*, 3 January 2006; *al-Quds al-'Arabi*, 3 February 2006. See also *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, 6 February 2006; *al-Ahali*, 8 February; *al-Wafd*, 1 April 2006.

the defensive but did not disappear, and their impact had been reflected in statements, Arabs visiting Auschwitz and Holocaust Museums, Arab scholars participating in conferences dealing with the Holocaust, and the general public debates. The new discourse brought the Holocaust to the fore and turned it into a major subject, but it did not succeed in undermining the traditional approach. However, despite its relative limited number of propagators, this approach brought about a change in the representation of the Holocaust even among its opponents. It diversified the mainstream discourse, while increasingly confining denial to Islamists. The vantage point of the discourse returned to be, as in the early period prior to the establishment of Israel, the acknowledgement of the Holocaust as a horrible historical fact albeit without relinquishing other persistent themes, such as relativisation and minimisation of the Holocaust, equation of Zionism with Nazism and the accusation of Zionist collaboration with the Nazis.

Hence, in the first decade of the twenty-first century, one may assert that the debate over the Holocaust is still dominated by the politics of the Arab-Israeli conflict and affected by the political realities of the Middle East. The mainstream Arab discourse accepts the occurrence of the Holocaust but strives to challenge its uniqueness and scope while de-legitimising Israel and Zionism. As Khalid al-Hurub contended, the discourse regarding the Holocaust must become a universal discourse that deals with racism and genocide in general, not only the Jewish Holocaust. He believes that it is also necessary to recognise the Palestinians as victims of the Holocaust, since they are the victims of its consequences – the establishment of the state of Israel. Nonetheless, he emphasises that the changing of the discourse will not lessen the uniqueness of the Jewish Holocaust and that the Arabs need to recognise it, in order to create a new discourse.⁵⁵

References

- Achcar, Gilbert. 2010. *Les arabes et la Shoah: La guerre israélo-arabe des récits*. Paris: Sindbad.
- Al-Barrawi, Rashid. 1948. *Mushkilat Al-sharq Al-awsat (The problem of the Middle East)*. Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahda al-Misriyya.
- Al-Ghazali, Muhammad. 1957. *Al-Isti'mar Ahqad Wa-atma' (Imperialism, hatred and greed)*. Cairo: Mu'assasat al-Khanji.
- Allubah, Muhammad 'Ali. 1954. *Filastin wa-Jaratuha (Palestine and its neighbors)*. Cairo: Lajnat al-Bayan al-'Arabi.
- Al-Wahhab al-Masiri, 'Abd. 1997. *Al-Sahyuniyya, Al-naziyya Wa-nihayat Al-tarikh (Zionism, Nazism and the end of history)*. Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq.
- Ateek, Naim. 1990. *Justice, and only justice: A Palestinian theology of liberation*. New York: Orbis.
- Bauer, Yehuda. 2001. *Rethinking the Holocaust*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Bishara, Azmi. 1995. Ha'aravim ve-ha-Shoah: Nituah Be'ayatiuta Shel Ot Hibur (The Arabs and the Holocaust: The analysis of a problematic conjunctive letter). *Zmanim* 53: 54–71.
- Bishara, Azmi. 1996. Response: 'Al Leumanut Ve'al Universaliyut (On ultra-nationalism and universalism). *Zmanim* 55: 102.

⁵⁵ *Al-Hayat*, 10 February 2008.

- Elad-Bouskila, Ami. 2005. *Ha-Or Ha-Qalush. Yitzugim Ve-tadmuyot Shel Dmut Ha-akher Ba-sifruyot Ha-arviyot Ha-moderniyot (The dim light. Representations and images of the other in modern Arabic literatures)*. Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University.
- Faris, Yahya. 1978. *Zionist relations with Nazi Germany*. Beirut: Palestine Research Center.
- Habibi, Emile. 1986. Your Holocaust our catastrophe. *Politica* 8: 26–27.
- Harkabi, Yehoshafat. 1972. *Arab attitudes to Israel*. New York: Hart Pub. Co.
- Jalul, Faysal. 1997. *Al-Nahar*, December 29.
- Jayyusi, Salma Khadra. 1998. The end of innocence. In *Remembering Deir Yassin: The future of Israel and Palestine*, ed. Daniel McGowan and Marc H. Ellis, 25–34. New York: Olive Branch Press.
- Kafuri, Michel. 1947. *al-Sahyuniyya: Nishatuha Wa-atharuha al-ijtima'i (Zionism: Its activities and impact)*. Cairo.
- Kanafani, Ghassan, Barbara Harlow, and Karen E. Riley (eds.). 2000. *Palestine's children: Returning to Haifa and other stories*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Kassir, Samir. 1998. La Nakba recommence? *Revue d'Etudes Palestiniennes* 17(69): 59–65.
- Khalidi, Rashid. 1999. Truth, justice and reconciliation: Elements of a solution to the Palestinian refugee issue. In *The Palestinian exodus, 1948–1998*, ed. Ghada Karmi and Eugene Cotran. Reading: Ithaca Press.
- Kronemeijer, Matthijs. 2006. An Arab voice of compromise. Hazem Saghih's 'in defence of peace' (1997). Utrecht University. <http://igitur-archive.library.uu.nl/student-theses/2006-0324-082630/UUindex.html>.
- Lewis, Bernard. 1997. *Semites and anti-semites: An inquiry into conflict and prejudice*. London: Phoenix.
- Lipstadt, Deborah. 1993. *Denying the Holocaust: The growing assault on truth and memory*. New York: Plume.
- Litvak, Meir. 2006. The Islamic republic of Iran and the Holocaust: Anti-Zionism and Anti-Semitism. *Journal of Israeli History* 25: 245–266.
- Litvak, Meir. 2010. *Iranian antisemitism and the Holocaust*. In: Antisemitism and the phenomenon of Holocaust denial, Dublin, November 17–19.
- Litvak, Meir, and Esther Webman. 2009. *From empathy to Denial: Arab responses to the Holocaust*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Mahmud, Mu'in Ahmad. 1971. *Al-sahyuniyya Wal-naziyya (Zionism and Nazism)*. Beirut: al-Maktab al-Tijari lil-Taba'a wal-Nashr wal-Tawzi'.
- Mansur, F. 1972. Ghasan Kanafani Fi Kutubih Al-ahada 'ashara (Ghasan Kanafani in his eleven books). *Shu'un Filastiniyya*, September 13.
- MEMRI, Special Dispatch No. 976. 2005. U.S.-educated Palestinian-Jordanian author Ibrahim 'Alloush on Al-Jazeera: The Holocaust is a lie; Al-Qaeda in Iraq is legitimate; the U.S. brought 9/11 upon itself. <http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/89/1461.htm>.
- Michman, Dan. 1993. She'erit Hapletah, 1944–1948: Rehabilitation and political struggle. *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 7(1): 107–116.
- Michman, Dan. 1995. 'Aravim, Tziyonim, Bishara ve-ha-Shoah: Masa Politit o Mehqar Academi (Arabs, Zionists, Bishara and the Holocaust: A political essay or an academic research). *Zmanim* 54: 119.
- Michman, Dan (ed.). 1997. *Post-tziyonut ve-Shoah (Post-Zionism and the Holocaust)*. Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University.
- Pecora, Vincent P. 1992. Habermas, enlightenment, and antisemitism. In *Probing the limits of representation: Nazism and the "final solution"*, ed. Saul Friedländer, 155–170. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Penkower, Monty. 1994. *The Holocaust and Israel reborn: From catastrophe to sovereignty*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Porat, Dina, and Roni Stauber. Anti-semitism worldwide 2005. The Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism. <http://www.tau.ac.il/Anti-Semitism/asw2005/arab.htm>.
- Qutb, Sayyid. 1947. *Al-Risala*, February 17.
- Qutb, Sayyid. 1989. *Marakatuna Maa Al-yahud (Our struggle with the Jews)*. Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq.
- Rifat, Muhammad. 1947. *Qadiyyat Filastin (The Palestine problem)*. Cairo.

- Riley, Karen E., and Barbara Harlow. 2000. Introduction. In *Palestine's children: Returning to Haifa and other stories*, ed. Ghassan Kanafani, Karen E. Riley, and Barbara Harlow. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Roumani, Judith, and Barry Rubin. 2007. An interview with Robert Wistrich: Antisemitism, the world's obsession. *Covenant* 1(3). <http://www.covenant.idc.ac.il/en/vol1/issue3/Antisemitism-The-World-Obsession.html>.
- Saab, Hassan. 1965. *Zionism and racism*. Beirut: Palestine Liberation Organization Research Center.
- Safran, Nadav. 1969. *From war to war: The Arab-Israeli confrontation, 1948–1967*. New York: Pegasus.
- Saghiya, Hazim. 1997. *Difaan an al-Salam (Defending peace)*. Beirut: Dar Al-nahar Lil-nashr.
- Somekh, Sasson. 1996. Dmuyot Yehudim Ba-sifrut Ha-'aravit Shel Yamenu (The image of the Jews in modern Arabic literature). In *Sofrim Muslemim 'Al Yehudim Ve-yahadut (Muslim authors on Jews and Judaism)*, ed. Hava Lazarus-Yafeh. Jerusalem: Merkaz Zalman Shazar.
- Tal, David. 2001. *The 1956 war: Collusion and rivalry in the Middle East*. London: Frank Cass.
- The Free Arab Voice Online (FAV). 2001a. The Jordanian Writers Association sets a new date for its forum. The Free Arab Voice Online (FAV).
- The Free Arab Voice Online (FAV). 2001b. Why the 'Holocaust' is important to Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims? The Free Arab Voice Online (FAV). <http://freearabvoice.org/>.
- The Journal for Historical Review. 2001. A conversation with Dr. Ibrahim Alloush. *The Journal for Historical Review* 20(3): 7.
- Webman, Esther. 2000. Rethinking the Holocaust. An open debate in the Arab World. In *Anti-semitism worldwide 1998/9*, ed. Dina Porat and Roni Stauber. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Webman, Esther. 2005. *Yitzug ha-Shoah ba-Siyakh Ha-tziburi Ha-mitzri, 1945–1962 (The representation of the Holocaust in the Egyptian public discourse, 1945–1962)*. Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University. (Unpublished dissertation).
- Wicken, Stephen. 2006. Views of the Holocaust in Arab media and public discourse. *Yale Journal of International Affairs* 1(2): 108–114.

Perceptions of the Holocaust in Turkey

Rıfat N. Bali

For Turkey, which succeeded in remaining neutral throughout World War II, the term ‘Holocaust’ is a thoroughly unfamiliar one. Indeed, as a foreign word it cannot be found in the country’s educational curriculum.¹ Likewise—and as a logical result of this situation, it is only the country’s Jews who take part in the commemorative ceremonies held as part of International Holocaust Remembrance Day.² Neither the country’s press nor its official circles show any interest. Similarly, it is only Istanbul’s Jewish residents who attend the films that are screened during the week-long commemorative Film Festival of Holocaust-related films that the community has been putting on each year since 2006.³

Despite this appearance of utter disinterest in the subject among the Turkish public, the Turkish press, politicians and intelligentsia make frequent reference to the Holocaust, both in a positive and negative sense. The Holocaust references have become, not coincidentally, more frequent since the 1970s, with the reappearance on the international agenda of the question of the massacre of the Ottoman Armenian population during the 1915 Deportation, the increasing radicalisation of Islamist currents in Turkey, which has been paralleled by a steady growth in antisemitism.

¹ According to data given by Süzet M. Sidi, who oversees the Turkish Chief Rabbinate’s Holocaust Commission, between the years 2001 and 2006 only the Üsküdar American Girls College, Robert College, the Istanbul German School (*Deutsche Schule Istanbul*), the St. George Austrian Lycée and Trade School (*Österreichisches St. Georgs-Kolleg İstanbul*) teach students about the Holocaust.

² International Holocaust Remembrance Day is observed annually on January 27, the date upon which the Soviet Army liberated the largest German death camp Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1945. This date was made an official date of commemoration by the U.N. General Assembly through UN Resolution 60/7, passed on November 1, 2005. The decision encourages every member state to observe this date by remembering the victims of the Holocaust and to develop educational curriculum pertaining thereto.

³ www.karakarefilmgunleri.com.

R.N. Bali (✉)

e-mail: rifat.bali@gmail.com

‘Positive’ Perceptions of the Holocaust

The Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust

The Turkish Republic would first face accusations of responsibility for the Armenian ‘genocide’ in 1965, the 50th anniversary of the 1915 Deportation. Ever since this time, and particularly since the 1970s and 1980s, this issue has increasingly occupied Turkey’s politics and press.

These accusations of genocide, directed at Turkey especially by American and European-based Armenian organisations, have been vigorously rejected by the successive Turkish regimes, and, since the 1990s, with the support of American Jewish organisations, Turkey’s Jewish community, and the Israeli government. Throughout this period, one of the principal arguments used by the Jewish organisations that have come to Turkey’s defence has been that of the uniqueness of the Holocaust. The reason for this usage is in fact one of the reasons that the words Shoah and Holocaust do not appear in the social science literature in Turkey; instead one finds the term ‘Genocide’ (*Soykırım*). In the western literature, on the other hand, the Holocaust is a term reserved for the Nazis’ systematic elimination of European Jewry, whereas the mass killings in Rwanda in the mid-1990s, Darfur in the mid-2000s or Anatolia in 1915 are all described by the more general term ‘genocide’. Even so, the average inhabitant of Turkey has never recognised or accepted the mass killings to which the Ottoman Armenians were subjected as a ‘genocide’. As for the country’s politicians and intellectuals (whose views largely tend to mirror those of the state apparatus), they frequently make reference to the ‘Jewish Genocide’ as one of their few defences against the accusations levelled against them, stressing that the claims of an ‘alleged Armenian Genocide’ are in no way comparable to the policy of systematic annihilation imposed by the Nazis against Europe’s Jewish population.⁴

The ‘Turkish Diplomats Who Saved Turkish Jews’

Another of the Holocaust references frequently heard within the framework of the Armenian issue is the subject of Jews who were ‘rescued’ by Turkish diplomats. In truth, a significant number of Jews possessing ‘irregular’ Turkish citizenship because they lived abroad – and, in this case, in countries under Nazi occupation – would have been subjected to deportation to the camps had they been unable to produce documentation of citizenship from the Turkish consulates or embassies in their

⁴For instance, see Prof. Türkkaya Ataöv’s series of articles from January 4–February 15, 2010, in the journal *Türk Solu*. In this series, Ataöv, who is well-known in Turkey for his publications from the 1980s countering the Armenian charges of genocide, writes that, after a visit to the Mauthausen and Dachau concentration camps, the “real genocide” was the one perpetrated by the Nazis.

respective countries. Nevertheless, there was never any overall Turkish policy or set objective on the part of the Turkish Foreign Ministry to rescue the country's Jewish émigrés. Any initiative to do such would have been the sole domain of individual Turkish diplomats. Certain Turkish diplomats would end up preventing their 'irregular' Jewish compatriots from such a fate, while others remained decidedly uninterested.⁵

Even though the evidence indicates that this was indeed the state of affairs, ever since the 1980s, when Armenian-American groups began to step up their annual efforts to lobby the U.S. Congress to pass a resolution recognising the events of 1915 as a genocide, the story of the 'saviour Turkish diplomats' has seen ever increasing coverage in both the Turkish and foreign presses. Even though the Israeli Holocaust commemorative and research foundation Yad Vashem has only recognised one Turkish diplomat, Selahattin Ülkümen, the Consul-General on Rhodes during the war, as a 'righteous gentile' (Ülkümen 1993).⁶ Over the years the Turkish Foreign Ministry has continued to insistently state that its diplomatic missions in France during the Second World War⁷ saved 'irregular' Jewish citizens living in the country from being sent to the camps by issuing them Turkish passports. For its part, the Turkish press has come to describe these diplomats as 'Turkish Schindlers' in reference to the wartime actions of small-time German industrialist Oskar Schindler commemorated in the movie *Schindler's List*.

The purpose of this emphasis, within both the Turkish press and the regime, on the Turkish government's tolerant and merciful attitude toward its Jewish citizens in such a trying period is to convey the message to its own public and to world opinion that a country and people that could show such humanity could not possibly have carried out a conscious genocide against the Armenians as the latter continually claim.

Negative Perceptions

"The Palestine Question and Genocide"

Within nearly all levels of Turkish society the view of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be described as "the Jewish people, having suffered an attempted genocide themselves, have now become the oppressors and are subjecting the Palestinian people to a genocide". Professor Çetin Yetkin, who is known for both his nationalist and anti-Western views, gives expression to this opinion in his book on the *Struma* affair, wherein 769 Romanian Jewish refugees, fleeing the Nazi onslaught in a less-than-seaworthy freighter of the same name, arrived in Istanbul on their way to Palestine. The Turkish regime both refused to give them transit visas, because they

⁵ For more on this subject see Bali (1999), Guttstadt (2008), Şimşir (2010).

⁶ See also <http://www1.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/statistics.asp>.

⁷ Paris Consul-General Namık Kemal Yolga (1914–2001), Ambassador to France Behiç Erkin (1876–1961), Marseilles Consul-General Necdet Kent (1911–2002).

did not possess entry visas to Palestine itself, and denied them the right to disembark. After several sweltering and fruitless weeks of negotiations, the Turkish regime ordered the engine-less ship back to Romania and for this purpose towed it into the extra-territorial waters of the Black Sea, where it was attacked by a Soviet submarine and sunk.⁸ In the preface to his book, Yetkin writes:

Throughout history, the Jews have faced oppression in Christian lands. When the Nazis came to power in Germany, they fell victim to a genocide unprecedented in history. They first conducted a bloody struggle against the British [in Mandatory Palestine] so that they could establish the State of Israel. Yet, after they established their state they forgot what had been done to them (or didn't want to remember it) and became to 'oppress the people of Palestine'... The one who today is in the role of the oppressor is the State of Israel, which was established by the Jews. Now they have taken on the role of their erstwhile executioners (Yetkin 2008, 9).

There are a great many other examples of this viewpoint, and one common feature is that they appear, almost reflexively, in reaction to any military operation or action conducted by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). In a 1995 piece in the Islamist *Zaman* newspaper commemorating the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, the author makes the following references to the 1982 massacres in the Palestinian refugee camps Sabra and Shatila:

The human heart shudders before such a sight. Even if you were to suppose that these scenes had not actually existed, that they were simply concocted for propaganda purposes, you would still curse the Nazis. Do the Nazis continue to burn today in Germany? What difference can there be between Solingen⁹ and Auschwitz? There's one thing that I have been unable to understand: How can it be that the Jews, who have been constantly cursed and persecuted in so much of the world, are able to do the same thing themselves? Sabra and Shatila remain fresh in our memories (Gönültaş 1995).

Over the years one can find numerous similar examples. During the IDF's April 2002 operation in the Jenin refugee camp during the Second Intifada, for instance, Turkish Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit reacted with the statement that "Israel is carrying out a genocide before the world's eyes".¹⁰ In January 2009, at the beginning of Israel's 'Operation Cast Lead' in Gaza, the Turkish press responded in a strident, antisemitic tone. Nuh Gönültaş, a writer for the conservative-nationalist daily *Bugün*, claimed that, "after viewing the IDF's actions the average person in the street is thinking that Hitler's [genocide against Jews] was justified" (Gönültaş 2008).

⁸ For a research on this subject see Frantz and Collins (2003).

⁹ The author makes reference here to the arson attack on May 29, 1993 on the house of a Turkish family. Two Turkish women and three girls died in the attack. The fire was set by local followers of neo-Nazism. Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/solingen>.

¹⁰ "srail soykırım yapıyor", *Radikal*, 5 April 2002.

Holocaust Denial

The first work of Holocaust denial to be published in Turkey was the 1971 Turkish translation of *The World Conquerors* by the Hungarian nationalist Louis Marschalko. A second edition was published in 1983. The second book of Holocaust denial, *Soykırım Yalanı* (“The Genocide Lie”), by Adnan Oktar, appeared in 1995. Oktar, who often writes under the name “Harûn Yahya”, is the director of an Islamic civil organisation called the “Science Research Foundation” (*Bilim Araştırma Vakfı*) that publishes information attempting to refute Darwin and evolutionary theory in general and whose publications all have a decidedly antisemitic tone and content. The aforementioned book, which attempts to present itself as a ‘scientific’ and scholarly work with footnotes, bibliography and high-quality printing and publishing, argues, on the basis of the works of western Holocaust deniers, that the Holocaust is a fabrication.¹¹ The third such work to appear in Turkey is the translation of Roger Garaudy’s *Les Mythes Fondateurs de la Politique Israélienne*. Although the work was banned in France on the grounds of violating the 1990 Gaysot Law, which forbids questioning the existence of crimes against humanity, when a case was opened against Garaudy personally, the Turkey’s Islamist press characterised it as the result of “public pressure generated by the State of Israel and the Jewish Lobby in order to guard against any criticism of Israel” (Bali 2001, 359–363). At the end of the trial Gülay Göktürk, a left-leaning writer for the liberal Turkish daily *Sabah* criticised Garaudy’s conviction as a limitation of freedom of expression (Göktürk 1998a). When Göktürk was protested by the paper’s readership, she then suggested in one piece that readers go on line and look at the website of the Committee for Open Debate on the Holocaust (CODOH), which is operated by Holocaust denier Bradley R. Smith (Göktürk 1998b).

Opinions voiced in Turkey questioning or denying the Holocaust have by no means been limited to the examples presented here. Indeed, they are numerous and varied. In a lengthy two-part article published over two consecutive days, the well-known Turkish novelist Alev Alatlı covered the International Conference to Review the Global Vision of the Holocaust, organised by the Iranian Islamic Republic at the end of 2006 for the Islamist daily *Zaman*. In her piece she referred to Holocaust deniers such as Roger Garaudy, David Irving, Paul Rassinier, and Fred Leuchter as “famous academicians”, as well as writing that Holocaust denier Mark Weber’s Institute for Historical Review (IHR) was subject to slanders of being a Holocaust denier and arguing that the institute did not ‘deny’ the Holocaust (Alatlı 2006). In a similar fashion,

¹¹ After September 11, Oktar would change his tack, now declaring that the Holocaust was a horror. He subsequently founded the website www.islamdenouncesantisemitism.com, adorning it with photographs of himself posing with various Israeli and Jewish religious figures.

Gürkan Hacır, who writes a weekly popular history column for the leading Turkish liberal daily *Akşam*, begins a piece discussing the arguments of genocide deniers so:

When you look back at recent history, Israel has always been like a spoiled and sassy child. Like a child who resorts to any means to get others to do everything it says, who always cries when it doesn't get its way, and who acts like the wronged party. Well then, can there really have been a plan for genocide by the world, in which Israel was to be the greatest victim? Is it possible that this whole thing is a myth concocted by Hollywood?

After reviewing the arguments, he then concludes with the following passage:

Can't an indisputable truth be considered scientific? In this way, in the West today a person who even asks 'Was there a genocide?' can be convicted [of a crime] and even put in prison. But there are a handful of scholars who are waging a courageous struggle on this matter. Who are these people? Intellectuals like Robert Faurisson, David Irving, Roger Garaudy, Ernst Zundel, Fred Leuchter, the conclusions of whose works I have referred to above, continue to question [received] truths, in the face of all manner of abuse and invective, prison terms, threats and even violence (yes, many have been physically assaulted) (Hacır 2010).

Hollywood and Films Dealing with the Holocaust

The screening of Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* and Roman Polanski's *The Pianist* in Turkish movie theatres and on Turkish television brought sharp reactions from both the Islamist and mainstream media outlets. After *Schindler's List* was awarded the Academy Award for Best Picture Mustafa Özcan, a writer for the Islamist daily *Zaman*, wrote that the "Holocaust has somehow become the sacred cow of the Jews – or perhaps better said: Israel's modern day [golden] calf; when it is smashed, the spell will be broken. It is for that reason that all of the Jews energy and effort is directed toward resurrecting it" (Özcan 1994).

For his part, the more liberal *Sabah*'s film critic Ali Hakan referred to the film's director, Steven Spielberg as "a Jewish partisan", and wrote that the film itself had gone from being a film about humanity to being a "Jewish film". He finally concluded with the line: "Is there really that much difference between the Nazi commander who torments Jews in the [concentration] camp and kills them for pleasure and the Israeli soldiers who crush the arm of a Palestinian boy with a stone?" (Hakan 1994). Islamist writers throughout the Turkish press expressed similar sentiments and comparisons (Yusuf 1999; Koru 2002). The screening of *The Pianist* was greeted by protests by the Islamic press, which characterised it as "Jewish propaganda" (Öztürk 2003). When the film's director Roman Polanski received the 'Oscar' that year they made the following analysis:

In the film, which is a repeat of other similar films, the Jews are depicted as the most oppressed people in the world. The helplessness before the Germans of the Jews, who have throughout history paved the way for strife, division and bloody events in the world, is presented in dramatic fashion. Nevertheless, the oppression of the Germans is greatly overshadowed by the cruelty that Israel today actively exercises against the Muslim Palestinian people in Palestine (Demir 2003).

Several months later, another writer for the same daily would make the following claim in a review of the three Holocaust-themed films *The Pianist*, *Schindler's List* and *Life is Beautiful*:

The point to which all three films want to bring the viewer is that the genocide that was seen as fitting for the innocent (!) Jewish race was something so profoundly sad as to boggle the mind, and the film delivered this message to the point of being nearly saying “please can somebody take pity on us?”. The directors, who choose the path of refraining from any commentary about the massacres and brutality, but instead of transforming it into a kind of spectacle in and of itself, and one overwrought with emotion, succeed in creating the desired impression of the just, brave, innocent and pacifistic Jew. These films, in which someone dies almost every few scenes – and that whether the spectator loves it or not – generate a sense that it is a human responsibility to nurture an abiding sympathy for Jewish race. But today these same Jews sign on to the most barbaric massacres that the world has ever seen – and may ever see – as if to justify the expression that “a person is hobbled by forgetting”. These films that they made are a type of self-justification, a manifesto of excuses, an apology for outrages (Erksoy 2003.)

Yazgülu Aldoğan, a writer for the popular centrist daily *Posta* gave the following assessment of the film *The Pianist*:

Israel is the thriving young country born and raised through the particular effort and assistance of the U.S.A..... The most powerful and wealthiest persons in the U.S.A. make up the Jewish lobby.... These days everyone is talking about Polanski's film *The Pianist*.... I won't be going [to see it]. Moreover, I won't go to any film that deals with the genocide perpetrated against the Jews! A half century has passed since then; how many genocides have we seen since then? But none of them have ever been made into the subject of a film. There may or may not have been a Genocide against the Jews. How about the genocide that the Jews have carried out against the Palestinians? Why doesn't the West make a film solely about this drama? On the contrary, any time blood is shed in Palestine, any time peoples' own houses are torn down upon their very heads, striking films about the oppression that the Jews suffered are plastered all over the market and we go and watch them and then leave the theatre, tears in our eyes, feeling sorry for the Jews. Did Polanski remember this drama that he experienced as a child because he is close to death? Why didn't he make 'The Pianist' until now? Why didn't he produce *The Pianist* before doing the *Tenant*? Does he only find the money to make a film about this subject [i.e., the Holocaust]? (Aldoğan 2003).

The American Media and Holocaust

In the year 2000 Can Dündar, a famous newsman, documentary movie maker and columnist of the mainstream *Sabah* newspaper published an article complaining that the world opinion is very much influenced by the American news channels and in the way they transmit news, most of the time in a biased fashion. He concluded by stating the following:

Since most of the Hollywood movies about World War II were made with Jewish capital, [the general public] now supposes that the only real victims of the war were Jews. It's embarrassing to have to resort to a 'body count' [of the casualties of this war], but it is useful to keep in mind that among the 40 million losses of the war, 6 million were Jews and 26 million Soviet citizens. Isn't it time we started viewing life through a lens other than Hollywood's [silver] screen and CNN's programming? (Dündar 2000).

Conclusion

Since the academic community in Turkey does not seriously or consistently concern itself with comparative works on subjects like the Holocaust and genocide in general, for the average Turkish scholar or citizen the matter is not a subject worthy of prolonged or thoughtful discussion and debate. When in our day Turks are accused (on a national level) of having perpetrated genocide against the Ottoman Armenians they feel themselves having been subjected to a great injustice; it is at this time that the Holocaust comes to mind, because this, in their mind, is the only instance in which the term 'genocide' can be used.

Nevertheless, the historical facts surrounding or reasons for the Holocaust do not interest Turkish society or its intelligentsia in the least. Since it by and large does not understand the Holocaust or its place as one of the darkest pages of human history, Turkish society likewise cannot fathom why so much research is conducted on the subject, or why films are made in order to inform and educate the public. While in today's Turkey most individuals – including journalists and academics – accept the historical reality of the Holocaust, within radical Islamist circles it is largely seen as a 'Jewish' or 'Zionist' lie or fabrication. The continual preoccupation with the Holocaust in the West is seen instead as propaganda by the Jewish lobby on behalf of Israel, which is committing genocide against the Palestinian people. Only a handful of human right activists had in the past reacted to the instances of Holocaust denial and/or inappropriate comparisons between the Holocaust and the sufferings of the Palestinians. However these activists were immediately criticised from all parts of the society with accusations of disseminating propaganda on behalf of Israel.

Turkish society still refuses to face up to the mass murder of the Ottoman Armenian population during World War I (a series of events which the majority of leading western historians and scholars have long recognised as a genocide). Moreover, it maintains a generally insular stance toward the rest of the world, preferring instead to concern itself solely with problems directly affecting Turkey. In such an environment, it is at best wishful thinking, at worst, delusional, to hope that the country will actually make the effort to understand the facts – much less the historical significance – of the Holocaust.

In summary the Holocaust has been instrumentalised and used as a benchmark, and will continue to be so, by the Turkish establishment and politicians for refuting "accusations of genocide against Armenians". On the other hand the same Turkish establishment and politicians, who profess that Turkey has always been a haven of tolerance to Jews, prefer to remain a passive spectator to the Holocaust denial publication and articles encountered in the Islamist sphere.

References

- Alatlı, Alev. 2006. Bakındı Şu İran'ın Yaptığına!. *Zaman*, December 21.
 Aldoğan, Yazgüllu. 2003. İsrail, Bizden Kıymetli. *Posta*, March 22.
 Bali, Rıfat N. 1999. *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türk Yahudileri Bir Türkleştirme Serüveni (1923–1945)*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

- Bali, Rifat N. 2001. *Musa'nun Evlatları, Cumhuriyet'in Yurttaşları*, 2nd ed. Çağaloğlu İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.
- Demir, Adem. 2003. Sinemada Yahudi Egemenliği. *Anadolu'da Vakit*, March 26.
- Dündar, Can. 2000. Amerikan Gözlüğü. *Sabah*, June 12.
- Erksoy, Aydın. 2003. Bahanelerin Manifestosu.... *Anadolu'da Vakit*, October 4.
- Frantz, Douglas, and Catherine Collins. 2003. *Death on the black sea: The untold story of the "Struma" and world war II's Holocaust at sea*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.
- Göktürk, Gülay. 1998a. Auschwitz'de Kaç Kişi Öldü?. *Sabah*, December 22.
- Göktürk, Gülay. 1998b. Galiplerin Tarihi. *Sabah*, December 24.
- Gönültaş, Nuh. 1995. Auschwitz. *Zaman*, February 5.
- Gönültaş, Nuh. 2008. Gazze'yi Bombalayan İsrail Uçakları Konya'da Eğitiliyor! *Bugün*, December 30.
- Guttstadt, Corry. 2008. *Die Türkei, Die Juden Und Der Holocaust*. Berlin: Assoziation A.
- Hacı, Gürkan. 2010. Soykırıma şüphe İle Bakanlar. *Akşam*, January 17.
- Hakan, Ali. 1994. Biz Ve Onlar Ve Ölüm..... *Sabah*, March 13.
- Koru, Fehmi. 2002. Filistin'in Lidice'si. *Yeni Şafak*, April 18.
- Özcan, Mustafa. 1994. Schindler'in Listesi'ne Dair. *Zaman*, March 28.
- Öztürk, Hüseyin. 2003. Piyanist. *Anadolu'da Vakit*, March 3.
- Şimşir, Bilal. 2010. *Türk Yahudiler: Avrupa Irkçılarına Karşı Te'rkiye'nin Mücadelesi: Belgeler (1942-1944)*. Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi.
- Ülkümen, Selahattin. 1993. *Bilinmeyen Yönleriyle Bir Dönemin Dışişleri: Emekli Diplomat Selahattin Ülkümen'in Anıları*. İstanbul: Gözlem.
- Yetkin, Çetin. 2008. *Struma: Bir Dramanın İçyüzü*. Genişletilmiş 2. baskı. İstanbul: Gürer Yayınları.
- Yusuf, Yunus. 1999. Banka Reklamından Schindler'in Listesi'ne. *Akit*, December 21.

Antisemitism and the Politics of Holocaust Memorial Day in the UK and Italy

Philip Spencer and Sara Valentina Di Palma

Introduction

Holocaust Memorial Day was established in the aftermath of the conference on Education, Remembrance and Research held in Stockholm in 2000, The Stockholm International Forum On The Holocaust. Some 46 states participated in the event and issued a declaration, affirming the global and enduring significance of the event, the need to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust, to honour those who stood against it and to educate future generations about the Holocaust. Since then, there have been annual memorial days across Europe, held on the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz in January 1945 by the Red Army.

The decision to hold such a day, to remember publicly and officially an event that is now receding into the past, was not an easy or facile one. It came about as the result of considerable discussion not just in one country, drawing on extensive expertise and research among historians and educators. It also had a political dimension, as a common commitment by states (and not just one state but several) to promote the event.

Both of these aspects – the historical and the educational on the one hand, the political on the other – have generated considerable debate. This is probably inevitable. This is not just because anything to do with memory, even at an individual level, is (one might say) almost inherently contestable. When it comes to collective

P. Spencer (✉)
e-mail: P.Spencer@kingston.ac.uk

S.V. Di Palma
e-mail: saravalentinadipalma@gmail.com

memory, it is however not just to do with “normal” issues of reliability and accuracy, perhaps particularly the further away in time from the event. Collective memory raises other, more difficult questions – about agency (whose memory are we talking about?); about content (what is it “we” are trying to remember?); about purpose (why are “we” trying to remember?) and method (how and where is this memory to be articulated?). Whose voice then gets heard must at some level then necessarily be a political matter, its outcome reflecting present priorities and preoccupations, including the need to deal with the aftermath of the Holocaust for its main victims, the Jews.

This is even more obviously so because public memorialising is a decision for the state, and in this case for European states, given that the Holocaust took place in that continent. What is at stake for European states is how they want to commemorate a past in which their apparatuses and citizens played a significant role, a past for which historians offer competing accounts. But these accounts are themselves located within conceptual frameworks, which are shaped by and help shape understandings of who is or was included or excluded from the state and Europe itself. This has a particular significance for European Muslims whose place in European states and societies is, currently, not secure on all sides. Their responses to Holocaust Memorial Day are a product both of how these inherently political debates are constructed and by how they themselves contribute to this debate.

Survivors, Perpetrators, Bystanders

In the case of the Holocaust and Holocaust Memorial Day, we can distinguish initially between three groups – survivors, perpetrators and bystanders, the famous triangle proposed by Hilberg (1993). For survivors, the day can be a moment to remember and to be heard in public what they experienced and lost, a moment to be perhaps increasingly valued the further away the event took place and the more limited the time left available to do so. For perpetrators, there is of course likely to be an inverse process, an unwillingness to recall, if not to deny what they did and to obscure what happened. For bystanders, there is the discomfort involved in thinking again about what was not done and what enabled the perpetrators to do what they did.

As time marches on, these problems have in a sense been bequeathed to subsequent generations to address. What place does society (or perhaps more accurately different groups within society) wish to allocate to survivors, what does it want to know from perpetrators, and how should it situate itself in relation to the category of the bystander?

In debates about Holocaust Memorial Day, each of these questions lie in some ways at the heart of the matter. There are arguments about which survivors should be honoured, about who the real perpetrators were, and about who allowed the Holocaust to happen. To each of these questions there can be different answers from different groups. In the case of responses from Muslims, these have been varied both within communities and over times. But they have not been formulated in isolation.

Rather they have been influenced by and connected up with other responses, which have helped or distorted them in various ways.

Before looking more closely at these responses, however, it is worth pausing briefly to consider some of the pre-history to Holocaust Memorial Day. For survivors, there was no immediate audience to their stories, traumatic and devastating though their experiences had been. Survivors had great difficulty at first both in finding their voice but then, more alarmingly still perhaps in finding listeners, in being heard, as Primo Levi famously observed. “I write what I would never dare tell anyone.” (Levi 2000, 126, Levi 2004, 148)¹ For some time no one, not only in Europe where the killing took place but also in Israel to where so many survivors fled, wanted to pay much attention. Europeans wanted to rebuild the shattered continent, whilst the young Israeli state was trying to break with what it saw as the also shattered world of the European diaspora. For their part, perpetrators too wanted silence, to draw a veil over their crimes. It was difficult from the outset to find those who were at all prepared to admit to their crimes. Many were rather much readier to push the blame or responsibility elsewhere on to superiors of one kind or another. Indeed, even today we lack much in the way of memories from perpetrators, whose testimony has had to be pieced together from trials and the evidence collected for them, with all the difficulties that poses. In the case of bystanders, memory was in a sense even harder to elicit, because the category itself did not come into use for a long time.²

Universalism and Particularism

These difficulties or evasions were part of what the eminent Holocaust historian Saul Friedlander has called “15–20 years of ‘latency’”, in which there was a “sustained silence of intellectuals, particularly the historians” (Friedländer 1994, 259). Even when they came to break this silence, historians were particularly reluctant to pay attention to survivors whose memories they regarded as unreliable. Indeed, this was explicitly argued as a methodological premise by Raul Hilberg, perhaps the doyen of early Holocaust historiography. But more generally, if the Holocaust was thought about, it was not primarily in terms of what had happened to Jews. In the immediate aftermath, even or perhaps especially when the camps were discovered, the Jewish identity of the victims was in an important sense hidden or obscured. As Tony Kushner has shown in the British case, films, newspaper reports, radio broadcasts did not draw attention to the fact that it was Jews who had been murdered first and foremost (Kushner 1994). Even the Nuremberg Trials, organised jointly by

¹ Many others made similar observations. “He who has Auschwitz as devastating tenant inside of himself, will never give birth to it either writing or talking about it but, on the contrary, he feeds it”, Edith Bruck confessed (Bruck 1999, 16).

² Some sense of the long-term obstacles in the way of eliciting such memories can be found in the recent book by Father Desbois on the killings in the Ukraine (Desbois 2008).

the Western Allies and the Soviet Union, did not focus, as Donald Bloxham has shown, to any significant extent on what happened to the Jews (Bloxham 2001). What was emphasised much more was the universal significance of the event, as if all the victims of the Nazis were somehow the same and indistinguishable. It was to take over a decade before the specifically Jewish dimension came to the fore, first in the Eichmann trial in Israel [the first time that survivors' voices had really been heard in public to any significant extent (Yablonka 2004)] and then more generally.

The shift was then from an abstract universalism to something which included at its centre something more particular and specific. But that specificity, as Jeffrey Alexander has argued convincingly, did not mean that the Holocaust had been captured, as has been sometimes inaccurately and misleadingly claimed, by some putative Jewish identity politics.³ In fact what was revealed by survivors' accounts, which took so long to be heard, was the extraordinary evil of the Holocaust. Only when survivors could testify openly to the horror of the Holocaust and be heard, could the radical evil of the event be registered.⁴

Only then did it become what Alexander has called a "moral universal", something to measure other events against and to illuminate the evil that can be committed on this planet (Alexander 2009). What happened to the Jews was both a particular matter as the Nazis attempted to annihilate the Jews entirely, and of universal significance because the Nazis sought to reshape humanity itself, by wiping the Jews off the face of the earth. It was a genocide but one that was so radical that it led to the formulation of the concept of genocide itself. The term genocide was coined (not at all coincidentally) by a Jewish lawyer, Raphael Lemkin who was born in but forced to flee from Poland, where 49 members of his family who could not escape with him were then murdered (Cooper 2008).

Responses from Muslim Organisations

The inception of Holocaust Memorial Day provided an opportunity then, after these two perhaps necessarily sequential phases in Holocaust comprehension (first as a universal, then as a particular event) to understand both together. This means paying attention both to what happened to the Jews, which is what was captured in the aim of honouring survivors, and to considering its universal significance.

³ For example by Peter Novick (2000).

⁴ The term "radical evil" in this context comes originally from Arendt (1968). Arendt, in many people's minds, later abandoned the term radical in favour of banal, in her highly contentious book on the Eichmann Trial, *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (Arendt 1965). There is considerable debate about whether this was an improvement or a regression in Arendt's understanding. It may make more sense, as Richard Bernstein has argued, to see these two terms as different sides of the same coin (Bernstein 1996).

This is the historical and political context in which we need to situate Muslim responses in the UK and in Italy. It is important to stress at the outset that these have been varied, both within communities (as there is no one Muslim community, *contra* any fundamentalist construction) and over time. At the risk of simplification (particularly serious perhaps here) we may nevertheless summarise these responses as the outcome of a see-saw of argument and pressure.

In the UK, organisations representing Muslim communities have moved back and forth from an initial refusal to participate, to participation with reluctance for a brief period, to a further refusal to participate, to organising alternatives. Between 2000 and 2007, the Muslim Council of Britain, the largest organisation representing Muslims in the UK and which has official recognition from the British government, voted repeatedly to boycott the day, claiming that to devote a day only to the Holocaust blocked recognition of other genocides, notably in the former Yugoslavia (where Muslims in Bosnia had been the primary victims) and much more contentiously and provocatively in the Palestinian territories (supposedly at the hands of Jews). It was argued that to hold such a day “hurt and excluded” Muslims.⁵ This position was maintained until 2007, despite considerable criticism, both from outside the organisation including some individual Muslims and from others – members of mainstream political parties, secularists and gay activists amongst them, but not primarily from Jews. In fact Jewish communities in the UK were themselves quite anxious about the inception of a Holocaust Memorial Day at the outset. There is no evidence at all to suggest that the day was conceived or authorised as a result of pressure from any Jewish organisation. Rather many Jews feared (perhaps presciently) that the day might become the object of politicised controversy which could be used by antisemites.⁶

At times during this period, the debate became quite heated, and leaders of the MCB complained about misrepresentation, particularly after an interview on the BBC of Iqbal Sacranie, the General Secretary of the organisation. The decision was reversed in 2008 in favour of participation but that was in turn reversed in 2009, following the Gaza War, when it was deemed intolerable to recognise Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) whilst Israel was killing Muslims in the Palestinian territories. In 2010 there was a further move to establishing what had often been mooted, a Genocide Memorial Day, organised by the Islamic Human Rights Coalition with representatives invited from South Africa (a veteran of Robben Island), the Stop the War Coalition, the Muslim Association of Britain and a number of other Muslim associations. This followed an earlier, isolated effort in 2007 by one small local authority, Bolton in the North of England, apparently at the request of the town’s inter-faith council, to abandon Holocaust Memorial Day and replace it a few months later by a Genocide Memorial Day (Smith 2007). Alongside this, however, there have also been more provocative moves, explicitly tying the Palestinian case to the

⁵ Helm (2005), cited in Werbner (2009, 444).

⁶ We would like to thank Mark Gardner of the Community Security Trust in the UK for pointing this out to us.

Holocaust deliberately on this very day. In 2006, for example, the Scottish Palestinian Solidarity Committee staged a production on the day of the notorious play *Perdition* which accused Zionists in Hungary during the war of collaborating with the Nazis in the Holocaust itself. In 2009, the same group invited a prominent supporter of Hamas (an organisation whose covenant specifically repeats several core Nazi themes) to speak on the day at an event titled “Resistance to Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing: from Europe in 1940s to the Middle East today” (Paul 2010).

In Italy, there are two major Muslim organisations. The Union of Muslim Communities and Organisations (Unione delle Comunità e Organizzazioni Islamiche in Italia, or UCOII) which was created in 1990. It has connections both to Syrian and Palestinian Muslims and also with the Muslim Brotherhood, an important conduit for the importation of Nazi ideas into the Middle East. During the summer of 2006, at the time of the Second Lebanon War, it placed advertisements in several Italian newspapers asserting a direct equivalence between Israel and the Nazis, under the banner of “*Ieri stragi naziste, oggi stragi israeliane*” (“*Yesterday Nazi massacres, today Israeli massacres*”) and “*Marzabotto uguale Gaza uguale Fosse Ardeatine uguale Libano*” (“*Marzabotto like Gaza like Fosse Ardeatine like Lebanon*”, [Marzabotto and Fosse Ardeatine are sites of the most famous Nazi massacres of Italian civilians in World War II]). The other major Italian Muslim organisation is the Islamic Culture Centre (Centro Culturale Islamico or CCI) established in 1995 and more closely associated with Muslims in Saudi Arabia, Morocco and Tunisia. In 2004 it produced a Manifesto against any form of terrorism including purportedly “defensive *jihad*” but was then attacked by the UCOII for being too moderate and not highlighting the supposed role of the United States and the Israeli responsibility in worsening the international relations. The UCOII for its part organised several demonstrations against the war in Gaza in January 2009 (Operation Cast Lead), characterised by violent antisemitic and anti-Zionist rhetoric which sought amongst other things to delegitimise Holocaust Memorial Day in Italy which was going to be celebrated in the week before and after 27 January. These demonstrations mobilised an unprecedented large number of Italian Muslims, bringing together radical Islamist activists and sections of the far left wing, waving various banners linking the Star of David and the swastika, as well as Hamas flags.

Criticising Holocaust Memorial Day

A number of different arguments have emerged in the course of this tortuous and ongoing history and it may be helpful (again at the risk of simplification) to try to identify and analyse them briefly here, not least because they may help understand why they have had some resonance, even in events held to mark the day itself. For none of these responses occurred in historical or educational, or political isolation. They can be situated, at least to some extent, in the context both of other debates about the history of Holocaust and other genocides, and in the context of other responses to contemporary political developments, especially in the Middle East but also in Europe.

The first argument has to do with responsibility for the Holocaust itself. This is the claim that the Holocaust has nothing to do with Muslims because it was a European, and especially a Christian, phenomenon. Whilst Islam has always had some presence in Europe, the large number of Muslims who now live in Europe migrated there after the war. They cannot have been responsible for what was done before they arrived. To require or ask Muslims to participate in HMD is to impute responsibility where there was none. Islam as a religion was entirely absent as a factor in the Holocaust. Much of the power of Nazi antisemitism derived not in any way from Islam but from a long history of Christian antisemitism which has no parallel or equivalent in the Islamic world, where Jews have always (so it has been argued) been treated with respect.⁷ Moreover, to the extent that Europe has resolved its long-standing Jewish problem, it has in any event replaced it with another – Islamophobia, in which today's Other has become the Muslim inside and outside Europe.⁸

But, secondly, this hatred of the Other is not new. It continues a long history of European racism and the violence which accompanied the invasion, conquest and exploitation of the Third World over centuries. To privilege Jewish suffering in this broader context is a profound mistake which obscures the centrality of racism to Western culture and politics, a racism which led to repeated genocides, which are not the central focus of Holocaust Memorial Day. This explains why what is needed then is not a Holocaust Memorial Day but a Genocide Day, in which recognition could be given to all the other genocides committed by the West over centuries.

Thirdly, this is a history which continues today. Western imperialism continues to wreak havoc over the world, including in the Middle East where many Muslims live. Many have argued that the US-led invasion of Iraq for example was genocidal. Some even argue that Western policy towards Iraq was genocidal before the invasion, in the form of sanctions. But the most provocative form of this argument focuses on where Israel (as either a client state of the West or the *eminence grise* behind the United States) is held to be committing genocide against the Palestinians. Here the argument in a sense has come full circle, in that it is the very victims of the Holocaust who are now held to be the leading perpetrators of genocide. To the extent that Jews are still recognised *as* original victims, the problem of the Holocaust has simply been exported. Unable to deal with its own guilt, the West has exported the victims to somewhere else, onto Others outside Europe, to commit the same crime of genocide that was inflicted in the first place upon them.

All of these arguments are flawed to varying degrees, although it is not possible here to rehearse the issues involved in any detail. If the Holocaust took place inside Europe, one of the reasons Jews could be killed so extensively was that they were not considered part of the European nations. However, in the Nazi mind, the intent was

⁷ This is not the space to go into arguments about the status of *dhimmitude* or to rehearse the ups and downs of treatment of Jews in the Islamic world (or, better, worlds). The similarities and differences between Christian and Islamic antisemitism were rehearsed some time ago by Léon Poliakov in his multi-volume *History of Anti-Semitism* (Poliakov 2003).

⁸ On the parallels between antisemitism and Islamophobia, see for example, Schenker and Ziad (2006).

not only to kill Jews inside Europe but everywhere they could lay their hands on them and Jews from North Africa were also among the victims. The Nazi intent was a global one, not just to kill European Jews but to annihilate the Jewish people entirely. There was enthusiasm from non-Europeans too for what Hitler was doing, not least from the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem who gave his full and active support to the project. Nazi antisemitism drew from various sources, including but not exclusively Christianity. Islamic antisemitism shares some features with Christian antisemitism, and Muslim antisemites could find much in Nazi antisemitism to admire and take on board subsequently, adapting it to their own priorities and conceptual frameworks.⁹

Islamophobia is not the same as antisemitism in several respects (which does not mean it does not exist, of course) and has no parallel in the murderous, exterminatory ambition of the Nazis. There is a complex relationship between European imperialism and racism, and between both and antisemitism and the Holocaust. In some respects they established precedents, most obviously perhaps in the case of the genocidal attacks waged by the German army in South West Africa in the early 1900s against the Herero people in what is now Namibia.¹⁰ But the Holocaust was the most radical case of genocide, which is precisely why it led to the creation of the Genocide Convention in the first place. That Convention, in many ways the fruit of Lemkin's heroic efforts, articulated for the first time what the crime was, and what needed to be done to halt or prevent it and to punish its perpetrators. In this connection, it is clearly inaccurate and quite misleading to describe US policy towards Iraq before or after the war (whatever its rights and wrongs) in terms of genocide, which requires intent to destroy a group in whole or in part.

But the inaccuracy of this charge rather pales before the hyperbole and perversity of the charge of genocide against Israel. There is no evidence of intent on the part of the Israeli state to annihilate the Palestinians as a group. However dire the conditions in which many Palestinians live, the Palestinian population has not shrunk but grown. Palestinian children have not (as was the case with aboriginal children in Australia for example) been taken away from their families and brought up as Israelis. There were no Jews left inside the Ghettos after the Nazis had destroyed them. Whatever the number of casualties inside Gaza, it is clearly not the case that the population has been annihilated. There are, moreover, no slave-labour camps nor are there any extermination camps anywhere in Israel/ the Palestinian territories.

The problem however lies less here in the inaccuracy, over-simplification and ultimately perverse character of these arguments than in their resonance and effect. For they have connected up with particular concerns and perceptions of some on the European Left and resonate too with certain well-known antisemitic tropes within both Catholic and Protestant traditions. This is not to suggest that the Left as a whole or Catholicism and Protestantism are responsible for these resonances and effect,

⁹ On the connections between the Grand Mufti and the Nazis and more generally on links between Nazi antisemitism and Islamists in the Middle East, see Küntzel (2007), Herf (2009).

¹⁰ See, for example, Zimmerer (2005), Madley (2005). The salience of these connections has been questioned, however, by others. See, for example, Gerwarth and Malinowski (2009).

though it may suggest that perhaps a more critical response from the Left and from Catholics and Protestants might help support those Muslims who have significantly challenged these ways of thinking.

In sections of the European Left today, these kinds of criticisms from some Muslims of Holocaust Memorial Day fall on receptive ears, particularly in the aftermath of the Iraq War and the Gaza conflict. The former was widely seen in some quarters as yet another example of Western imperialist violence with familiar genocidal dimensions and consequences, whatever the purported (and widely derided) purposes or justifications. The latter saw repeated (and largely unchallenged) comparisons being drawn with the Warsaw Ghetto in particular, not just in terms of the use of overwhelming Israeli fire-power against Palestinian civilians but in the subsequent blockade, which was not just seen as illegal but wholly immoral.

On Holocaust Memorial Day

This has not (yet) resulted in a widespread withdrawal of support for the day itself, but has (in the experience of both authors at any rate, both of whom have given several talks on the day in recent years) impacted on how the day itself has been structured and managed. At one level, this is apparent in the increasingly general level of themes adopted for the day, such as “Standing up to Hatred” (2009) or the “Dignity of Difference” (2007) when earlier themes made rather more specific reference to the Holocaust – “Britain and the Holocaust” (2002) or “Children and the Holocaust” (2003).

There is nothing in such themes to prevent speakers or audiences connecting the particular to the universal. But our experience at any rate suggests that this is becoming more difficult, not because of the growing distance in time from the Holocaust but because audiences themselves seem to be becoming increasingly uninterested in the particular, in antisemitism and in the fact that Jews were the victims.

In both the UK and Italy, despite the obvious differences in political culture, in history and predominant religious affiliations, there have been startling similarities in the way in which audiences have responded on a day marked to remember the Holocaust. It is precisely because these differences are so marked that the similarities are so striking. The UK after all was the one European country to stand firm against the Nazis, even if it did not go to war to save the Jews. It has a deeply anchored liberal democratic culture and, although the separation of Church and State is not formalised, the form of Protestantism adopted by the majority is not (comparatively speaking) a source of political motivation or instruction. Italy by contrast was, under Mussolini, an inspiration to some extent for Hitler, an ally of Nazi Germany, and helped send many Italian Jews to their deaths. It is also predominantly a Catholic country, with Catholicism acting in many ways as a political reference for many in the population. The presence of Muslims in each country is quite different. There is a significant Muslim population in the UK, connected to its imperial past, drawn from many places, but especially the Indian sub-continent. There is no equivalently sized Muslim population in Italy.

Yet the arguments adopted by some Muslims in both countries seem to strike very much the same chord. In our diverse experiences, which include speaking in a municipality, in a town hall, in a district prison and in Universities, the same arguments adduced above reappeared repeatedly. Rather than showing interest in accounts or understandings of what happened to the Jews, there has been a marked indifference to that particular experience. Instead there have been repeated comparisons between Israel and Nazi Germany as nation states, with “the” Jews cast as the new Nazis, claims that gas is being used to kill Palestinian children, and that Gaza (and the Occupation more broadly) is today’s Warsaw Ghetto. These have been backed up with arguments about the West’s collusion with Israel, both in its treatment of Palestinians and in the war in Iraq, connected to and deriving from the West’s historic and continuing role in genocide, with Israel cast as self-evidently part of the West, and Muslims as the target.

In some cases, there were self-declared Muslims in the audience but in other cases not. This did not seem to make any significant difference to the thrust and tenor of discussion, which suggests that the criticisms most openly articulated by some Muslims in both countries need to be located in a broader context which goes beyond the national.¹¹ They are criticisms which cast a particular opprobrium on Jews which (if unchallenged) risk effectively silencing survivors who know all too well that they were themselves targeted precisely because that is who they were.

Rearticulating Antisemitism

It is hard not to think that converging streams of antisemitism are involved in the formation of what threatens to become a new common-sense. It is sometimes argued that the antisemitism of the Nazis was quite different to the earlier forms of antisemitism. But Nazi antisemitism drew on several different sources – pagan, Christian, nationalist, modern as well as anti-modern. These did not all disappear when Nazism was defeated, either in Italy or the UK.¹²

¹¹ This may modify some of the criticisms made of Holocaust Memorial Day, that it has been distorted by nationalist considerations of one kind or another. See, for example Stone 2006.

¹² In a recent survey carried out by Centro di Documentazione Ebraica Contemporanea (Centre of Contemporary Jewish Documentation) of Milan, it emerged that in Italy some 44% of the population is hostile to the Jews, out of which 10% share the classic anti-Jews stereotypes (they are not really Italian, they are not trustworthy, etc.), but without prejudices against Israel and the Holocaust) and politically they belong both to the Right and to the Left; 11% adopt modern antisemitic stereotypes (wealth, control on the media and finance, etc.); 11% is constituted above all by persons of the Left, secular and with high levels of education, who have prejudices against Israel and think that the Holocaust is a political self-pitying instrument when, on the contrary, “the Jews behave like Nazis against the Palestinians”, and finally 12% is constituted by genuine antisemites who adopt all the prejudices of the other three groups and belong both to the extreme Right and Left (Mannheimer 2009).

An important aspect of the radicalism of Nazi antisemitism can be found in the way in which it built on the past, fusing the different elements in a new combination.¹³ There is no reason to think that subsequent forms of antisemitism cannot do the same, and rework earlier themes, drawing on continuing sources of inspiration, and articulate them for a new context. In the kinds of arguments we have encountered and identified here, a similar process may be at work. The emphasis on the Holocaust in a Holocaust Memorial Day has been challenged both from within and without. In the former case, it involves an effort to rework the event itself, by universalising it, so that the Holocaust ceases to be of central or primary significance even on that day. In the latter case, it involves formulating a more direct challenge to the event itself, and an effort to replace it with something that is only universal, and in which the specificity of the Holocaust disappears. In both cases, however, (albeit to different extents) it is possible to discern two familiar antisemitic tropes – turning things upside down and unmasking conspiracies. In blaming “the” Jews for genocide today, the central victims of the most radical genocide of all have now been turned into conspiratorial perpetrators. This was, as Peter Fritzsche has pointed out (Fritzsche 2008), one of the first claims that the Nazis made, as they were preparing for what they themselves were planning to do.

That such arguments can be made so uninhibitedly today, even or especially on a day set aside to remember the Holocaust, both by some Muslims and by others, is quite disturbing, not least because it risks silencing survivors one more time. As time passes, moreover, they will increasingly not be there to speak for themselves. Given the difficulty that survivors had in communicating their experience in the first place, this would compound an original offence, which was both a profound injustice and an obstacle in the way of understanding the significance of this great catastrophe.

But the question of communication also points to another problem. A common memory (which is what Holocaust Memorial Day aspires to articulate about a critical occurrence with both a universal and a particular significance) requires communication, as Michael Rothberg (following Avishai Margalit) has argued. A central moment in this communication means listening to accounts of what happened both to a particular group (Jews), so that we can see both what happened to them and at the same time to humanity itself (from which the Jews were now to be eliminated). We need to make sense of them together, Muslims and non-Muslims in the multi-cultural Europe we all inhabit. This is not after all, as Rothberg rightly insists, “a zero-sum game” (Rothberg 2009, 11). It is perfectly possible to remember what happened to the Jews at the hands of the Nazis, to honour the survivors *and* to think about subsequent genocides (real ones that is, not imagined ones) and injustices. Indeed, as Rothberg has shown, this is exactly what has happened precisely on the question of colonialism itself.

One might go further. Given the radical nature of the Holocaust, the radical injustice that it involved, the fact that it was recognised *as* a genocide, the “crime of crimes,”¹⁴

¹³ For a more extensive discussion of this, see Spencer (2010).

¹⁴ International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda: Prosecutor v. Kambanda, Judgment and sentence, ICTR – 97–23-S (4 September 1998), para. 16.

it may only be by attending to what happened there that we can attend to the injustices that have tragically followed in its wake, whoever has committed them and against whoever they have been committed, by and against Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

References

- Alexander, Jeffrey. 2009. *Remembering the Holocaust: A debate*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press.
- Arendt, Hannah. 1965. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A report on the banality of evil*. New York: Viking.
- Arendt, Hannah. 1968. *The origins of totalitarianism*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Bernstein, Richard J. 1996. *Hannah Arendt and the Jewish question*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bloxham, Donald. 2001. *Genocide on trial: The war crimes trials and the formation of Holocaust history and memory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bruck, Edith. 1999. *Signora Auschwitz: Il Dono Della Parola*. Venezia: Marsilio.
- Cooper, John. 2008. *Raphael Lemkin and the struggle for the genocide convention*. Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Desbois, Patrick. 2008. *The Holocaust by bullets: A Priest's journey to uncover the truth behind the murder of 1.5 million Jews*, 1st ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Friedländer, Saul. 1994. Trauma, memory and transference. In *Holocaust remembrance: The shapes of memory*, ed. Geoffrey H. Hartman, 259. Oxford/Cambridge: Blackwell.
- Fritzche, Peter. 2008. *Life and death in the Third Reich*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Gerwarth, Robert, and Stephan Malinowski. 2009. Hannah Arendt's ghosts: Reflections on the disputable path from Windhoek to Auschwitz. *Central European History* 42(2): 279–300.
- Helm, Toby. 2005. Holocaust day must be scrapped, say Muslim leaders. *The Telegraph Online*. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1498206/Holocaust-Day-must-be-scrapped-say-Muslim-leaders.html>.
- Herf, Jeffrey. 2009. *Nazi propaganda for the Arab world*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Hilberg, Raul. 1993. *Perpetrators victims bystanders: The Jewish catastrophe, 1933–1945*. 1st Harper Perennial ed. New York: Harper Perennial.
- Küntzel, Matthias. 2007. *Jihad and Jew-hatred: Islamism, Nazism and the roots of 9/11*. New York: Telos Press Pub.
- Kushner, Tony. 1994. *The Holocaust and the liberal imagination: A social and cultural history*. Oxford/Cambridge: B. Blackwell.
- Levi, Primo. 2000. *Se Questo È Un Uomo: La Tregua*. Torino: Einaudi.
- Levi, Primo. 2004. *If this is a man: The truce*. London: Abacus.
- Madley, Benjamin. 2005. From Africa to Auschwitz: How German South West Africa incubated ideas and methods adopted and developed by the Nazis in Eastern Europe. *European History Quarterly* 35(3): 429–464.
- Mannheimer, Renate. 2009. Antisemiti, in Italia Sono Il 12 Per Cento. *Il Corriere Della Sera*, January 26.
- Novick, Peter. 2000. *The Holocaust and collective memory: The American experience*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Paul, Jonny. 2010. Brits deem anti-Israel Group Holocaust event 'Offensive'. *The Jerusalem Post*, September 29.
- Poliakov, Léon. 2003. *The history of anti-semitism: from the time of Christ to the court Jews*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Rothberg, Michael. 2009. *Multidirectional memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the age of decolonization*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Schenker, Hillel, and Abu Zayyad Ziad. 2006. *Islamophobia and anti-semitism*. Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers.

- Smith, Amanda. 2007. Fury as council axes Holocaust memorial service. *The Bolton News*, January 27.
- Spencer, Philip. 2010. The left, radical anti-semitism and the problem of genocide. *Journal for the Study of Anti-Semitism* 2(1): 133.
- Stone, Dan. 2006. History, memory, memorial and museums. In *History, memory and mass atrocity: Essays on the Holocaust and genocide*, ed. Dan Stone. Portland: Vallentine Mitchell.
- Werbner, Pnina. 2009. Displaced enemies, displaced memories: Diaspora memorial politics of partition and the Holocaust. *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology* 74(4): 441–464.
- Yablonka, Hanna. 2004. *The state of Israel vs. Adolf Eichmann*. 1st American ed. New York: Schocken Books.
- Zimmerer, Jürgen. 2005. The birth of the Ostland out of the spirit of colonialism: A postcolonial perspective on the Nazi policy of conquest and extermination. *Patterns of Prejudice* 39(2): 197–219.

‘ **Hamas, Hamas, All Jews to the Gas.**’ **The History and Significance of an Antisemitic Slogan in the Netherlands, 1945–2010**

Evelien Gans

Introduction

‘The whole Utrechtsestraat was filled with crowds. A substantial share consisted of middle-aged women in traditional Moroccan attire wearing headscarves (an unusual sight on the Utrechtsestraat, since Amsterdam is fairly segregated). I remember thinking: all those women appearing outside their homes and neighbourhoods: they’re allowed to venture out for this demonstration, but otherwise they wouldn’t be... People were calling out the most horrible things, definitely ‘all Jews to the gas [chambers].’ I overcame my fear out of anger, and I went up to one of those youths and asked him ‘do you have any idea what you’re saying?’ I felt a powerless rage, combined with repression, and was somewhat fearful. It was overwhelming, especially down that narrow street, teeming with people as far as the eye could see.’¹

This statement is from a passer-by, an Amsterdam woman of Jewish descent, who lives near the Utrechtsestraat with her family and occasionally shops there. On Saturday afternoon, 13 April 2002, Amsterdam’s city centre was the scene of a massive pro-Palestinian, anti-Israel demonstration dedicated to the cause ‘Stop the war against the Palestinians.’ With about 15,000 participants (estimates range from 10,000 to 30,000), the Nederlands Palestina Komitee as the main organiser achieved the highest turnout at any demonstration in the Netherlands since the Eurotop in 1997 (Krebbers and Tas 2002). Although the composition of the demonstrators was varied,

This article is a somewhat more elaborate translated version of Gans 2011a. The article was translated by Lee Mitzman.

¹E-mail from Heleen Gans, the author’s sister, 9 May 2009.

E. Gans (✉)

e-mail: e.gans@niod.knaw.nl

the majority consisted of Moroccan and Turkish Dutch people. In addition to representatives of Turkish and Moroccan organisations, the speakers addressing the demonstration from the platform included politicians from D'66, Groen Links and the SP [Socialist Party]. The International Socialists encouraged participation, as did organisations that were Jewish, such as Een Ander Joods Geluid [A different Jewish sound] or partly Jewish, such as Vrouwen in 't Zwart [Women in black]. The demonstration received extensive media coverage, thanks to the massive turnout and the unprecedented large share of participants of foreign extraction, but just as much because of the controversial content of some of the banners and slogans. Toward the end of the afternoon, the demonstration, back where it had started on the Dam central square, got out of hand. A recognisably Jewish man (wearing a yarmulke) was beaten up. A group of Moroccan youths got into a fistfight with the police; there were 19 arrests.

The *Marokko Community* website was euphoric. 'Just came back from Amsterdam: great day... Everybody felt united. Many native Dutch participated and people from all kinds of different backgrounds.' And: 'the media is portraying riots after a demonstration... but there was a demonstration with a few small riots at the end.' A third participant delights in the 'unity among so many cultures' but deplores 'that Jews press! Soeb7anallah! Now I've seen with my own eyes how they distort the facts!'² On 10 June 2002 in the Dutch House of Representatives questions were asked about statements made during the demonstration that were punishable according to criminal law. The Amsterdam regional discrimination hotline counted 75 swastikas. Inventories of the comparisons between Nazi Germany and Israel from other sources list: banners featuring Sharon with Hitler's moustache and reading 'Israel Nazi state' and 'Stop the Palestinian Holocaust.' Among the various blatantly anti-Semitic slogans, such as 'Jews are dogs' and '*Juden raus*,' one is especially popular: ' Hamas, Hamas, all Jews to the gas.'

The question is how to place this slogan, sending the Jews retroactively from 2002 to the gas chamber, in the proper context. April 2002 was not the first time it resounded. Who introduced the slogan? What is its past? What purpose does it serve? And why is the anti-Semitic profanity linked to Hamas, the Palestinian extremist and Islamic rival of the PLO. Basically, what has happened to the memory of the gas chambers – where European Jews were exterminated on a massive, industrial scale?

Globalisation of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

The Amsterdam demonstration of 13 April 2002 might at first appear to revolve exclusively around international politics. On 28 September 2000 Ariel Sharon, at the time the leader of the opposition in Israel, trailed by hundreds of Israeli soldiers and security guards, visited the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, a historic site and

² <http://forums.marokko.nl/archive/index.php/t-5438.html>. Accessed 23 September 2010.

previously cause for outbursts between Jews and (Palestinian) Arabs. Into the first century C.E., the Second Temple stood here, commemorated to this day at the foot of the mount by what is known as the Wailing Wall, a Jewish holy site. Atop the mount is the Al Aqsa Mosque, the third holiest site of Islam after Mecca and Medina. Seven years had passed since the Oslo Accords were signed between Israel and the Palestinians in 1993, resulting in part from the first Palestinian Uprising (Intifada) that broke out in 1987 against the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. After the initial optimism and the first actual steps, such as Israel's transfer of territory on the West Bank to what was known as the Palestinian Authority (PA), the peace process rapidly stalled. Especially the Palestinians, who stood to gain the most, were deeply disillusioned and lost hope of a just peace. Sharon's visit in full military regalia was perceived as provocation and ushered in the Second Intifada. Violence escalated between Israel and the partially autonomous Palestinian territories, claiming many civilian casualties on both sides. This is the consequence of military offensives and liquidation campaigns on the one hand and suicide bombings by the Palestinians on the other hand. Israel has always had the upper hand. All told, by the middle of 2005, the Palestinian death toll was three or four times as high as that of the Israelis.³ Only in January 2005 did Sharon – by then prime minister of Israel – agree with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to cease the hostilities.

From the start of the Second Intifada, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict appears to have spread well beyond its actual borders. Both population groups, – Jewish – Israelis and – Arab – Palestinians, have in effect been adopted by companions, co-religionists and sympathisers all over the world: the conflict has globalised. The cause for the demonstration (also held in e.g. London) on 13 April 2002 included the Israeli invasions of Palestinian cities such as Bethlehem and Ramallah (Yasser Arafat's headquarters) and on 3 April, the refugee camp near the Palestinian city of Jenin, which according to the Israelis was a hotbed of terrorism and the place of residence of two perpetrators of recent suicide bombings. Palestinian sources circulated rumours that the Israeli armed forces had caused a bloodbath at Jenin, killing 400 to 1,400 Palestinians. This instigated massive indignation worldwide. After some initial objections, Israel allowed Human Rights Watch to enter the area in late April. The organisation determined that 52 Palestinians (including 22 civilians) and 23 Israeli military had perished. The Palestinian death toll was thus considerably less than had been alleged. Still, Israel was accused of human rights violations, for example failing to distinguish sufficiently between military and civilian targets, attacking and killing medical personnel, using civilians as human shields and inflicting excessive damage on the civilian infrastructure. Palestinian militants were charged with endangering the lives of their own people by placing explosives in the homes of civilians (Human Rights Watch 2002).

'Jenin' thus symbolises the present bleak outlook for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It is also the umpteenth example of a propaganda campaign, in which the

³ For exact figures, see e.g. the reports of B'tselem, The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, <http://www.btselem.org>.

modern, perfectly equipped Israeli media and information apparatus faces off against the far more primitive Palestinian system that is nonetheless surprisingly effective in some cases. The demonstration on 13 April did not protest the Hamas suicide bombing of 27 March preceding 'Jenin', when a group celebrating Passover was targeted in Netanya (killing 29), or the following one, in which a bus in Haifa was hit on 9 April (killing 8). According to world opinion, the victims on the Israeli side pale in comparison to the far higher number of casualties among the Palestinian population (the same holds true for the separate category of those injured on both sides). The random nature of the suicide bombings is countered by Israel's military supremacy, which does not eschew civilian victims and collective punishment, corners the Palestinians economically and humiliates them psychologically. The repressive and corrupt versus the extremely violent nature of the warring (evolving into outright enemies from the 2006 elections) Palestinian leadership organisations, the PLO and Hamas, is dwarfed by the Israeli arrogance of the power. The so-called Operation Cast Lead, the invasion of the Israeli army in Gaza in December 2008 after years of bomb attacks from the part of, among others, Hamas, only strengthened this pattern. Approximately 1300 Palestinians were killed (for the most part civilians and 13 Israeli). Israel, exercising its power, appears to be determined both by its sweet taste and benefits and by a fear that is sometimes founded but more often irrational and in part an echo of the past (Burg 2008). The echo of the past, however, is of secondary importance to those who bear the brunt of it. The same holds true for the many outsiders who identify with the Palestinians for various reasons, empathising with the party that they view as the prototypical underdog.

Antisemitism in the Netherlands After the Liberation

'Hamas Hamas, all Jews to the gas.' Although the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is set in the Middle East, part of the performance appears to consist of texts, terms and notions from Western Europe, where the Shoah, the twentieth-century genocide of the Jews, took place. The association of Jews with gas derives not from Palestine, Egypt or Iran but from Nazi Germany and was adopted in countries from where the Jews were deported to the gas chambers. This list includes the Netherlands, where antisemitism had increased under the Nazi occupation. Long-standing antisemitic stereotypes were, as so many times before, adapted to a changed historical context, in an evolutionary and dialectical way. Rumours that already circulated during the occupation were widely publicised after the Liberation. Jews in hiding were said to have been reckless, deceitful and tight-fisted toward those who hid them. Upon returning, Jews were said to have dug up their stash of banknotes immediately and to have taken the best jobs, driving around in the biggest cars. They went back to playing first fiddle (often literally), rather than being humble and grateful to those who had risked their lives to help them (Gans 2002, 2003a).⁴

⁴On the evolutionary and dialectical character of antisemitism see Chazan (1997).

Materialistic connotations lurked behind many of these accusations. These were attributable to those making them (e.g. the share of what were known as *'bewaariërs'* [custodians], who refused to return Jewish property),⁵ but they were projected onto the Jews: the materialist Jew, the cowardly, cunning and neurotic Jew: Judas and Shylock rolled into one. In addition to arising from systematic Nazi propaganda, post-Liberation antisemitism in the Netherlands was attributable to both psychological and socio-economic factors. Psychological, because Jewish survivors, simply by returning, reminded the Dutch of their failure. The mechanism of blaming the victim provided an excuse: the victims had not been worthy of rescue. Antisemitism also served an economic and social purpose. Amid the endemic deprivation immediately after the war, Jewish survivors reclaimed their homes, jobs, clients, money and other possessions. Some non-Jewish Dutch people felt threatened by this course of events; they perceived the Jews as competitors. Since over 100,000 Jews had disappeared – approximately 75% of all Jews in the Netherlands had been murdered – they had become accustomed to no longer having any Jews around (Gans 2002, 2003a).

To set the record straight, the Netherlands had by no means degenerated into a quagmire of antisemitism. Instead, there were two sides, one that openly expressed its prejudices and another that adamantly contested them: Jews and non-Jews, journalists, Zionists, opinion makers, politicians – from a distinctly individual perspective. The government did not intrinsically oppose what it regarded as 'latent antisemitism' but in fact used anti-Jewish sentiment as an argument for refraining from certain measures that would have benefited Jews, such as admitting Jewish refugees, as doing so would increase antisemitism. In this respect, it implicitly confirmed the prejudices harboured by the population.

While most anti-Jewish stereotypes had existed for centuries by 1945, one was indisputably hot off the presses. The curse 'they forgot to gas you', often heard immediately after the Liberation, is an antisemitic stereotype from the post-Holocaust era that perceives Jews as people who exist 'to be gassed.' Those invoking the profanity 'they forgot to gas you' likened themselves, whether consciously or sub-consciously, to the Nazis deporting Jews to the gas chambers. Identifying Jews with gas was also made visible in a repertoire that exists to this day of sick 'Jewish' jokes that over time replaced the traditional Jewish jokes about Sam and Moos. 'What is the difference between a Jew and a hot bun? A hot bun doesn't scream when you toss it in the oven' (Kuipers 1997; Gans 2003b). Such jokes presumably serve to keep the actual horror at a distance. In Israel, Jews murdered in the *galut* (in exile) were described as 'soap' and were contrasted with the bellicose Zionists and ghetto fighters. This stereotype of the passive or even coward Jew in the Diaspora and the depreciation it implied also served to conceal that the Zionist movement had failed in its efforts to convince the majority of Jews to migrate from Europe in time and had been similarly unable to rescue them from destruction (Segev 1993, 98, 183).

⁵ This originally ironic-neutral term designating Dutch people entrusted with Jewish property during World War II led 'good' custodians to be distinguished from 'bad' ones, based on post-war experiences. The term has by now acquired a negative connotation – which in turn reveals how commemoration of the Shoah has changed.

In the Netherlands the expression ‘they forgot to gas you’ embodies for the first time the identification of Jews with the Shoah in a perverse, i.e. not reflective and historical but stereotypical and antisemitic, twist. When from the late 1940s, ever more became known about the horrors of the Shoah, antisemitism became taboo. From the mid 1960s, including the publication of Jacques Presser’s *Ashes in the Wind: The Destruction of Dutch Jewry*, the persecution of the Jews became progressively pivotal in public memory of World War II (van Vree 2009). Meanwhile, though, the expression ‘they forgot to gas you’ persisted as a vulgar profanity during escalating street fights and disagreements, in bars and over the phone.

Secondary Antisemitism

In the 1980s the dominance of the Shoah in historical impressions and collective Dutch memory progressively eroded. The film maker and columnist Theo van Gogh introduced his own, pornographic distortion in the association of Jews with gas. Van Gogh came to embody political incorrectness in the Netherlands. In his self-proclaimed crusade against the ‘4 May industry’ and in support of freedom of expression – which he described as ‘one and indivisible’ – he wrote the leaflet ‘Een Messias zonder Kruis’ (A Messiah without Cross), republished several times in later years, targeting the – Jewish – movie maker and author Leon de Winter. In this leaflet, for example, he introduced the image (conveyed in his rendition by Leon de Winter) of a cartoon about two copulating yellow stars in a gas chamber and the joke ‘Why does it smell like caramel here? Today they’re burning only the diabetic Jews’ (van Gogh 1984). In several columns published in the University of Amsterdam weekly *Folia*, he also provided pornographic distortions of the persecution of the Jews, as in his fantasies about the ‘*Feldwebels* of the circumcised police’ and about De Winter with his private parts wrapped in barbed wire performing the act of love in Treblinka.⁶ In a long succession of court trials, Van Gogh was alternately convicted and acquitted of antisemitism.

Theo van Gogh always delighted in decrying his adversaries as members of the NSB (National Socialist movement in the Netherlands) or the SS, especially the Jewish ones.⁷ In the mid 1990s he selected a new target for his diatribes: he switched from Jews to Muslims, labelling them goat fornicators. His source of inspiration

⁶Theo van Gogh, *Folia*, 10 and 17 September 1993. Van Gogh – after I accused him of invoking antisemitic stereotypes in *Gojse nijd & joods narcisme* (Gans 1994) – maintained that I [Ms. Gans] had wet dreams about being laid by Dr Mengele (Van Gogh 1994b). On preoccupation with perversion and the purported sexual deviance of the – circumcised – Jew, see e.g. Gilman (1991) and Leibovici (1995).

⁷He renamed the writer Marcel Möring Marcel ‘Göring’, alleged that de Volkskrant [a left-wing Dutch daily of Catholic origin] journalist Anet Bleich had written for *Volk & Vaderland* [Dutch National-Socialist newspaper] and accused the respective movie and theatre directors Rudolf van den Berg and Leonard Frank of being members of the NSB.

were presumably fictitious statements by Ayatollah Khomeini in a non-existent book,⁸ that circulate on countless anti-Islamic websites (Hulsman 2005a, b). He altered the context of his anti-Jewish stereotypes.

The social-democratic politician and administrator Job Cohen was Mayor of Amsterdam from 2001 to 2010. Theo van Gogh casted the Jewish Cohen, in his eyes the personification of despicable multi-culturalism, in the role of a modern-day Judas, as a member of the NSB and a collaborator. 'Of all con-artists that the Fifth Column of the goat fornicators imposes on us [...], Cohen is the most cunning.' Cohen was, according to Van Gogh, among 'Allah's butchers' as a 'Jew you send on a dirty job.' He was a 'mayor in wartime' and 'by nature an NSB man' (Gogh 2004a, b).

The stereotype of the Jew who collaborates with his Middle Eastern cousin by marriage, the Muslim, in his campaign against the Christian West, dates back to the Middle Ages (Arkel 1991, 54; Cutler and Cutler 1986). Van Gogh thus invoked the stereotype of the Jews as connivers, as depicted in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, fabricated in the late nineteenth century but highly influential to this day. Behind the scenes, Jews are preparing their worldwide coup and cunningly use others to achieve this purpose.⁹

Van Gogh's digs at Jews exemplify the 'secondary antisemitism' concept, which was introduced in the late 1950s by Peter Schönbach (1961), member of Adorno and Horkheimer's *Frankfurter Schule* and drew considerable attention in Germany, but went virtually unnoticed in the Netherlands. This frequently concealed form of antisemitism arises from defensive mechanisms and targeted Jews after 1945 not despite but precisely because of the Holocaust. It has been attributed the modifier 'secondary,' because it is less about wartime antisemitism than an anti-Jewish attitude in coming to terms with the past and its effect on the present. Jews were perceived as disruptive; their very existence perpetuated the painful and guilt-ridden memory of Auschwitz. By obstructing the path to 'normalising' the past by their mere existence, they instigated rancour; as victims, Jews diverted attention and resources from others. Nor were the Jews believed to be choir boys either; secondary antisemitism comes close to *blaming the victim*.¹⁰ Adorno embraced the concept of secondary antisemitism. He himself emphasised that the taboo of 'open aggression against Jews' led to antisemitism in allusions, what he described as 'crypto antisemitism'.

⁸ Tahrirrolvasyleh deel 4, 1990.

⁹ Collaboration between 'Jews' and 'Muslims' also figured in the digital tirade of a certain M.E. van der Jagt in response to Cohen's speech on Liberation Day 2009. After calling Cohen a 'self-Islamicizer' and a 'leftist con-artist,' he writes: 'After throwing the Germans out the front door, people like jc sneaked the Muslims in through the back door. How bad will it get?' (Seen on Elsevier's website in May 2009; deleted since then.) Such an association is at odds with the present, far more common, close link established between Judaism and Christianity in the 'Judeo-Christian civilisation' concept. Here, Judaism is annexed and juxtaposed against Islam. This contradiction, in conjunction with centuries of Christian antisemitism, demonstrates how Judaism has been degraded to a versatile bargaining chip.

¹⁰ For literature on secondary antisemitism, see e.g. Rensmann and Schoeps (2008); Benz (2002); Bergmann and Erb (1991).

This gave rise to the ambiguous rationale that ‘speaking against Jews was no longer allowed’ (‘Man darf ja gegen Juden heute nichts sagen’) (Adorno 1971, 106–109, 115–116). The taboo against antisemitism thus served as a supporting argument. In the Netherlands post-war cases of secondary antisemitism and crypto antisemitism occurred as well, such as accusations that Jews were exploiting their suffering, and that they felt entitled to special privileges (Gans 1999, 574, 2002, 331). More recent forms include ridiculing or pornographying the persecution of the Jews (as Van Gogh did), as well as trying to relegate the Shoah to the past (known as *Schlussstrichbedürfnis*).

‘The war is over and done with,’ was the title and gist of an article in *Vrij Nederland* in 2003 by the historian and journalist Chris van der Heijden. In his work about World War II, Van der Heijden describes an equalising historiography, in which ‘good’ and ‘bad’ and victim and perpetrator converge, people are at the mercy of fate, and individual freedom of choice is minimal. Van der Heijden, thanks to his work *Grijs verleden* [Grey past] (Heijden 2001), literally and metaphorically symbolises what has become known as the ‘grey’ image of World War II in Dutch historiography. Van der Heijden is exceptional in the way he approaches – and basically avoids and ignores – the Shoah and Jews and Judaism. Capitalising on the prevailing ambience of political incorrectness, he manifests as an advocate of ‘historical incorrectness’ (Heijden 2003a, 2001, 2003b; Eickhoff et al. 2010). He opens *Grijs verleden* with the statement: ‘First there was the war, then came the story of the war. The war was bad, but the story made the war even worse’ (Heijden 2001, 9). Here, he suggests that impressions and historical accounts have depicted the war as more dramatic and horrific than it actually was. The obvious question that arises is: for whom? Did ‘the story about the war’ make the persecution of the Jews worse than it was?

Van der Heijden has no idea how to address the Shoah and merely describes it as ‘that unmentionable phenomenon’. ‘Is the murder of the Jews as unique as it is always made out to be?’ he wonders. He does not respond with a direct denial. But by providing an extensive list of mass murders from world history, ranging from that of the Indians in South America in the sixteenth century to the mass slaughters in Srebrenica and Rwanda in the twentieth century, he does so implicitly (Heijden 2001, 12, 406–407). He also relativises the Shoah by systematically questioning its victims: the Jews. Comparing *Grijs verleden* to Van der Heijden’s other publications, such as *Joodse NSB’ers* [Jewish National Socialists] (van der Heijden 2006) and *Israël. Een onherstelbare vergissing* [An irreparable mistake] (van der Heijden 2008), certainly conveys a series of stereotypes. Jews are respectively portrayed as meek lambs, as partial and full collaborators and as perpetrators. In *Joodse NSB’ers*, a handful of ‘bad’ Jews is expected to polish the blazon of Anton Mussert, the *NSB* leader (Heijden 2006).¹¹

¹¹ For a more detailed analysis of Chris van der Heijden’s work see Gans (2010b). This article was also published in German as ‘Eigentlich waren doch alle ein bisschen Täter und Opfer... Nivellierungstendenzen und sekundärer Antisemitismus im Geschichtsbild des niederländischen Historikers Chris van der Heijden’ (Gans 2011b).

While both Van der Heijden and Van Gogh reproach others for being 'obsessed with the Holocaust,' their accusation backfires. Van Gogh distorted the gas chambers into a "satire" – '*Doucht allen mee / onder Zyklon B*' ['Come take a Zyklon B shower'] (Gogh 1994a) – and Heijden uses the gas chambers as a political metaphor. Those who criticise the ideas about Muslims of Geert Wilders, party leader of the *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (PVV), are in his view abusing the World War II frame of reference, invoking the murder of the Jews as the 'ultimate spectre.' 'Comparing migration policy today with the 1930s brings to mind the gas chambers,' explains Van der Heijden. As long as Wilders does not violate the law, he is free to say and think whatever he likes. 'Any suggestion that in doing so he is rebuilding the gas chambers is not only unfounded but counterproductive as well' (van der Heijden 2007). It is Van der Heijden and nobody else, however, who is responsible for inserting the term 'gas chamber' in the integration debate.

Van Gogh and Van der Heijden both suffer(ed) from 'goyish envy,' which is when non-Jews envy Jews for their presumed Jewish traits, talents and privileges. In the post-Holocaust era goyish envy has been transformed into jealousy of the ultimate victims: the Jews (Gans 1994). While Van Gogh accused fellow movie maker Leon de Winter of exploiting Jewish suffering, Van der Heijden wrote that before the Nazis turned Jews into scapegoats, hardly a soul knew that Jewry existed outside Amsterdam. Only in the mid-twentieth century did they become 'the centre of attention' (van der Heijden 2003a, 2008, 19). In an interview with the *NRC Handelsblad* daily in 2001, he happened to mention: 'Any one of us could have ended up in the gas chamber, on either side of the door' (Kris 2001). The gas chamber is thus removed from its historical context and annexed into the present: it serves everybody, including Chris van der Heijden.

The journalist-film maker and the historian are both part of a new generation that objected to what was perceived as the obsolete and by then disproportionate preponderance of World War II and the Shoah in Dutch collective memory. This stand is also illustrated by the upheaval surrounding the performance of the controversial play by the famous German director Werner Fassbinder, *Garbage, the City, and Death* [Der Müll, die Stadt und der Tod], in 1987. Protests against the play came primarily from Jewish circles, in part because of the main character, who was described merely as 'the Rich Jew.' The director and actors – all students at the Toneelschool Amsterdam [Theater Academy Amsterdam] who were preparing the performance – responded to the protest by proclaiming that they were fed up with the – Jewish – 'dictatorship of suffering.' This was not a complete surprise. Their aggrieved view of the Jew as the ultimate victim was instigated in part by 'Jewish narcissism', which denotes the inclination of their adversaries to reduce their self-image to two extremes: suffering and pride. The majority of the Jewish protesters decried Fassbinder's play as antisemitic without having read it (Gans 1994, 34–38, 2010a).

The most extreme form of secondary antisemitism is by definition the denial that the Shoah happened. Such a denial may be followed by the allegation that the Holocaust is a lie told by Jews (or Zionists) to justify founding and perpetuating the Jewish state. Holocaust denial occurs mainly among the extreme right. Neo-Nazi's and like-minded groups, caught between a rock and a hard place by laws prohibiting

antisemitism and racism, have discovered a new and fruitful operating arena on the Internet. Websites such as that of the Dutch chapter of the neo-Nazi Stormfront faction (White Pride / World Wide) – the provider is in the United States – frequently trivialise and deny the Holocaust.

But even on a run-of-the-mill internet forum manifesting as the largest of its kind in the Netherlands (Fok!), in the middle of generally civilised discussions about the Holocaust, anonymous chatters question whether the gas chambers had existed as instruments of industrial annihilation. For example, Zaan_23:

What gas chambers? They were delousing chambers. I think you've spent too much time watching Schindler's List [...]. Santa Claus or the Holofoax, they're all the same, both generate cash (for commercial capitalists and greedy noses).¹²

Just to be clear: 'noses' are code for Jews.¹³

Philosemitism, Anti-Antisemitism and Red (Jews) Noses

Thus far, opinions vary as to whether Geert Wilders' Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV), in its quest for ethnic homogeneity, rejection of Islam as an 'ideology', and anti-Muslim stereotypes pertains to the extreme right or the right-wing radical spectrum or is best qualified as right-wing populist or as a 'social-nationalist movement' (Davidović et al. 2008; Moors and et al. 2009; Kerres 2010).¹⁴ It is not neo-Nazi, if only because it is devoid of antisemitism. On the contrary, its spokespeople, who manifest publicly as bosom buddies of Israel and as warriors against antisemitism in Islamic circles, are more accurately described as philosemitic.

Philosemitism may be perceived as sincere sympathy for Jews, but also as the mirror image of antisemitism: Jews are appreciated or even glorified (rather than despised, envied or hated) for the very fact that they are Jewish. Philosemitism is thus, in negative terms, the other side of the same coin.¹⁵ Moreover, like antisemitism,

¹² Response by Zaan_23 to the article 'Britse Holocaust-ontkenner vrijgelaten' in FOK.nl on 20 December 2006.

¹³ On the association between 'Jews' and 'noses', see e.g. Gilman (1991). For an illustration, see http://www.haguecityfirm.nl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2607:de-gepelde-gamaal&catid=146:header2&Itemid=170. Accessed 24 March 2011.

¹⁴ Abram de Swaan, interviewed by Edmond Hofland in Hollands Diep, October/November 2010, referenced in Beerekamp 2010 speaks about 'de sociaal-nationalistische stroming'. PVV figurehead Martin Bosma likens the PVV to the tradition of the disappointed social democrats Drees senior and junior, who both expressed criticism of immigration (Meijer and Sommer 2010).

¹⁵ This view was propagated by the Jewish historian and poet Jaap Meijer (alias Saul van Messel). He composed the poem 'filosemiet': 'erger dan / haat die / beledigen kan: vriendschap / waartegen / ik mij niet/ verdedigen kan' ['philo-Semite: worse than / hate that / may offend: friendship / against which / I have no defence'].

philosemitism may be instrumental in that it may be conducive to certain political and other objectives that have little or nothing to do with Jews and Judaism. In keeping with this view, the Netherlands – and Europe – have recently ‘officially’ become known as heirs to Judeo-Christian civilisation. But the ‘Judeo-Christian tradition’ as the foundation of Europe is a myth. In Christian Europe Jews suffered exclusion and persecution. Embracing the Jewish tradition as an essential political-cultural foundation serves primarily as a tool against Islam, against Muslim immigrants and against Turkish accession to the European Union (EU) (van Vree 2010).

Whether the term ‘philosemitism’ accurately fits the bill is another question. Like the pervasive misunderstanding that the PVV by definition supports Israel – the party identifies with the right and extreme-right wing in that country – whether the party is ‘purely’ philosemitic is similarly questionable. It supports only Jews who basically subscribe to the ideals of the PVV and a Jewry that meets its own criteria. Leftist Jews are not regarded as ‘true’ Jews; they submit to Islam.¹⁶ As stated before, the impression that Jews and Muslims are conspiring against the – Christian – West lives on. The view that Cohen, precisely because he is Jewish, identifies closely with Muslims and their minority status was voiced by Theo van Gogh but circulates on (mainly right-wing and PVV) websites and forums as well. A recent example is the book – and the hype it created – by the Dutch Israeli and Holocaust survivor Manfred Gerstenfeld *Het Verval. Joden in een stuurloos Nederland (2010) [The Decline. Jews in a rudderless Netherlands]*. Gerstenfeld is attached to the *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs*, which deals with ‘Israel’s security needs and international standing’. In his book, he seriously reckons with a recurrence of the Shoah brought upon by the Muslims, the Dutch ones included, and made possible by, among others, Job Cohen, stereotypically depicted as a cowardly, treacherous, non-Jewish Jew (Gerstenfeld 2010).¹⁷

With respect to the PVV and Jewish or Israeli ideologists who think along the same lines as Gerstenfeld, the term anti-antisemitism comes to mind, as it conveys not only that philo- and antisemitism can be instrumental, but that the struggle against antisemitism may be so as well. This struggle may degenerate into an objective in its own right, into what has been called a ‘self-contained cause, insulated from the actions and passions of the rest of the world’. Similar anti-antisemites are profoundly convinced of serving the ‘Jewish cause’, but, actually, they are looking with one eye only. At present, anti-antisemitism of this kind coincides with hereticising Islam (Hertzberg 1993; Gans 1994, 137–139, 2011c, 2007).

¹⁶ Ralph Pluim, *Hoe nemen Nederlanders het Jodendom van Job Cohen en van andere Joodse politici waar?* Amsterdam 2010 (unpublished) pp. 90–91.

¹⁷ The book depicts the Netherlands as a country in which conscious Jews cannot live safely anymore; it received a lot of publicity, also internationally. See furthermore: Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, <http://www.jcpa.org> (Gans 2011c). In an interview Manfred Gerstenfeld said that Cohen promotes possibly with his party programme a second Shoah, and: “People like Van Agt [a former, influential Catholic politician and prime minister who is outspoken anti-Israel – EG] and Cohen help to create an atmosphere which makes possible a second Shoah in the coming ten years” (*Nieuw Israëlietisch Weekblad (NIW)*, 10 December 2010).

In Jewish circles responses to the ‘philosemitism’ of Wilders and company have ranged from positive appreciation through scepticism to outright rejection.¹⁸ So far, prominent PVV members have not yet expressed anti-Jewish stereotypes publicly. The sole exception was in June 2009, when Dutch MP Martin Bosma (PVV) misspoke in his response to a question from a PVV voter about what the PVV would do against the NOS (Dutch television and radio broadcasting foundation), where ‘the same red noses constantly’ deprived the PVV of a say.

Bosma:

You mention a lot of red noses. Unfortunately, we can’t chop them all off from Hilversum [Dutch broadcasting centre]. Although I would be delighted to do so – just imagine toppling Clairy Polak... I’d better stop, no fantasies. (EenVandaag 2009)

Why did Bosma mention Polak, with her proverbially Jewish name, of all journalists presumed to have left-wing sympathies? He probably subconsciously associated ‘nose’ with ‘Jew,’ as has been customary for centuries. The connection between ‘red’ and ‘Jew’ (these words rhyme in Dutch) also corresponds with a stereotype in existence since the rise of socialism.¹⁹

Around the same time, Bosma’s fellow MP and party member Fleur Agema asserted during a parliamentary debate about Moroccan problem youths: ‘Antisemitism and homophobia are not Dutch customs. They have been imported, a dismally large share from Morocco.’²⁰

Agema’s remark revealed that her historical awareness was considerably inferior to that of someone who replied to her online: ‘Never knew that Anton Mussert and his cronies were Moroccan.’²¹

Football Hooliganism

When Theo van Gogh published his pamphlet ‘Een Messias zonder Kruis’ [A Messiah Without a Cross] in the 1980s, the connection between Jews and gas surfaced in a dramatically different social context as well. Football hooliganism became widespread.

¹⁸ See e.g. ‘De joodse flirt van Geert Wilders: een discussieavond over filosemitisme en islamofobie’, organised by the Menasseh Ben Israël Instituut, featuring Harm Ede Botje, Frank van Vree, Daniel Schwammenthal and Evelien Gans, moderator David Wertheim, 16 February 2010, online at www.mbi.nl/?id=31.

¹⁹ On the stereotype of the Jewish socialist (and the Jewish capitalist), see e.g. Beller (1997); and on that of the Jewish Bolshevik, e.g. Gerrits (2009): In Dutch, ‘red’ and ‘Jew’ rhyme: ‘rood’ en ‘Jood’.

²⁰ This remark was made by Agema on 15 April 2009; see the Partij voor de Vrijheid website, www.pvv.nl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1906; the audio recording of her entire speech is posted on YouTube, www.youtube.com/watch?v=CDSvX0FrDd8. In 2011 in the context of the parliamentary debate on ritual slaughter PVV MP Dion Graus called ritual slaughter ritual torture.

²¹ Thread by “Cloned”, ‘Hahaha, die Fleur Agema van de pvv’, Maroc.nl, 13 May 2009, www.maroc.nl/forums/showthread.php?t=271826. Anton Mussert was the leader of the NSB in the Netherlands, before and during the Second World War.

Especially among supporters of football clubs in the major cities, exchanges of verbal and physical aggression escalated. Ajax, the football club based in the East of Amsterdam, has a Jewish image, mainly because many of its pre-war supporters were Jews. Ajax supporters have endured slogans such as 'We gaan op jodenjacht' [Let's hunt down the Jews] and 'Dood aan de Joden' [Death to the Jews]. They have turned the designation 'Jew club' into a sobriquet, introduce themselves while chanting in chorus as 'Jews' ('We are Jews') and carry banners featuring a Star of David. They call their opponents 'Farm boys' and call for bombs to be dropped on Rotterdam.²² Jews started to be linked to gas chambers the moment Ajax supporters were greeted by massive hissing, and 'Jews to the gas' became a standard chant (Kuper 2000). Opinions vary widely as to whether this is – secondary – antisemitism. Those who disagree say that Ajax deliberately elicits these chants by manifesting as a 'Jew club,' that the reference concerns 'symbolic' rather than 'actual' Jews, and that no physical violence is used against such 'actual' Jews. Those who agree assert that Ajax's members manifesting as 'Jews' does not justify the response of 'Jews to the gas' by opponents, and that negative connotations concerning Jews in and around stadiums (will) quietly turn into antisemitism.²³

In 1982 (the year of the Lebanon War and the massacre in the Sabra and Shatila Palestinian refugee camps) the confrontations got a political tint, when the supporters of Rotterdam's Feyenoord club raised Palestinian flags in response to Ajax's Israeli ones and adopted slurs and banners from anti-Israel demonstrations. In the mid-1990s the slogan 'Hamas Hamas, all Jews to the gas' first resounded from the bleachers of Feyenoord and FC Utrecht. FC Utrecht supporters repeating this practice in 2003 upon arriving at Amsterdam's Central Station were sent straight back on the train. By now, 'Hamas Hamas, all Jews to the gas' had also taken root among groups of youths of mainly Turkish and Moroccan descent, who, as became similarly clear at the demonstration on 13 April 2002, identify closely with the Palestinians in the Israeli-(re)occupied territories. The Center for Information and Documentation on Israel (CIDI) – a very concerned ally of Israel – reported in 2000, soon after the Second Intifada started, that a few groups of Moroccan boys and youths had voiced the slogan 'Hamas Hamas, all Jews to the gas' (Cidi Israel Nieuwsbrief 2000; Gans 2011a, 143). In the same period Moroccan youths in Amsterdam were also known for directing verbal and physical abuse against Jews. In the following decade this form of aggressive antisemitism was not stopped. Rabbi's and other clearly recognisable Jews turned into personae non gratae in certain Amsterdam quarters. Among young adults, especially those enrolled at VMBO [Voorbereidend Middelbaar Beroepsonderrwijs] occupational secondary schools, with many third generation immigrant pupils, 'Jew' became a popular racial slur.

Meanwhile, in the football stadiums, predominantly the domain of the 'Dutch Dutch', antisemitic slogans live on. In March 2011, players and supporters of the

²² Massive Nazi bombing of Rotterdam led to the Dutch surrender in May 1940.

²³ See also: 'We gaan op jodenjacht', *Kroniek Antisemitisme in Nederland 1945–2004*, Monitor Racisme & Extremisme website, <http://www.monitorracisme.nl/content.asp?PID=242&LID=1>.

ADO football club of the city The Hague, the seat of Dutch government, after their unexpected victory over Ajax, were recorded singing ‘We gaan op Jodenjacht’ and ‘Jood, jood, schop hem dood’ [Jew, Jew, kick him to death], and yelling Hamas Hamas all Jews to the gas’. The football player who sparked it off, has been condemned by his club to pay a fine, and has been suspended for the duration of four games; the coach, who stood by and did not intervene, was suspended for one. Supporters, however, complain that their hero is the victim of a ‘jodenstreek’ [Jew trick], and say the penalty is unfair, because ‘everybody does it’. In the public debate those who protest against what they see as a manifestation of football anti-semitism, are countered by those who speak of ‘enthusiasm which has gone too far’.²⁴

Jews as Nazis

The Jewish stereotype has always embodied a paradox; it shows a Janus face. ‘The Jew’ as a pariah and as Satan, the Jew as a waste product and a powerful conspirator (Friedländer 2007, I: 21–122; II: 43). ‘The Jew’ is inferior and superior at the same time and instigates both repulsion and admiration and envy. Even the stereotypical link between Jews and the Holocaust acquires a twofold meaning: that of Jews in the gas chamber and that of Jews as Nazis. The association of Jews with Nazis, like the one between Jews and gas, dates back much further than Van Gogh, football hooliganism and the anti-Israel demonstration in 2002. It relates, for example, to attitudes toward Dr F. Hollander, Esq., a – Jewish – public prosecutor. His dynamic post-war special dispensation of justice was regarded in some circles as disproportionately harsh. Rather than being ‘chastened,’ Hollander had returned from his trials and tribulations filled with resentment and had become encumbered with ‘Nazi traits’, reported *De Telegraaf* daily in 1954 (Verhey 1991, 196).

In addition, soon after the Liberation, comparing Zionism to Nazism proved irresistibly tempting, especially in traditional Catholic circles. In 1949 the most outspoken vehicle of Catholic antisemitism, the Dominican and future University of Nijmegen professor of the Old Testament J.P.M. van der Ploeg, described Zionism as ‘colonialism combined with theft and murder’ and as ‘a new Nazism.’ Others labelled the Zionist military actions in Palestine against the British and the Palestinian Arabs as ‘Goebbelian’ (Gans 2003c).

But just as antisemitism lost its legitimacy after the war, sympathy for Israel grew together with feelings of compassion, guilt and shame. This sentiment peaked in 1967, when Israel (‘David’), after years of harassment by surrounding Arab nations and their violent war rhetoric, managed to beat ‘Goliath’ and even to expand its

²⁴www.haguecityfirm.nl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2607:de-gepeldegamaal&catid=146:header2&Itemid=170; [http://dewerelddraaitdoor.vara.nl/Video-detail.628.0.html?&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=21428&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=626&tx_ttnews\[cat\]=146&cHash=63ef342215166426ceb7069237f16ee7](http://dewerelddraaitdoor.vara.nl/Video-detail.628.0.html?&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=21428&tx_ttnews[backPid]=626&tx_ttnews[cat]=146&cHash=63ef342215166426ceb7069237f16ee7). Both accessed 24 March 2011.

territory to include East Jerusalem, the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan. As a result of the victory, what became known as occupied territories comprising a large Palestinian population turned into a dominant issue in Israeli politics. And 1967 proved to be a year of paradoxes. In addition to widespread solidarity with small, courageous Israel, the seeds were planted of growing discomfort and rising indignation and revulsion at Israel's position on the Palestinians (Gans 1999, 842 et seq.). Criticism of Israel, anti-Zionism (denial of the legitimacy of Israel as a Jewish state) and antisemitism operate separately but also have a strong tendency to overlap. They form a fatal triangle – as do Jews, Zionists and Israelis (Gans 2003c, 2007).

Declaring Nazism and Zionism to be interchangeable is obviously tempting. Equating the two offers alluringly simple diagrams in an infinitely complex world, as well as a delightful release: we are even. Even 'the Jew' now proves capable of war crimes and other atrocities, and this settles the score – from the failure of non-Jews toward Jews. This reverses the right-and-wrong frame of reference that has come to prevail in the West since 1945. The ultimate victim of the Nazi of bygone days, the Jew, has turned into a Nazi and the Palestinian into a Jew. The radical left is moreover very receptive to solidarity with the Palestinians from the perspective of Israel as one of the last bastions of colonialism. The widely publicised equation of Israel to the Third Reich on the banners of the 2002 demonstration had previously figured on a VPRO²⁵ radio broadcast in 1979, when the originally anarchist author Anton Constandse called the Israelis the Nazis of the Middle East (Bregstein 2007, 114). Parallels between Zionism and Nazism permeate *De schaduw van de ster* [The shadow of the star] (2002), an anti-Zionist pamphlet of Peter Edel that crosses the boundary of antisemitism in a mix of old and more recent antisemitic myths and conspiracy theories. 'Hamas Hamas, all Jews to the gas,' chanted mainly the young Moroccan and Turkish Dutch demonstrators in 2002; doing likewise on 3 January 2009 after Israel had invaded Gaza, transforming Jews from Nazis and back into Jews to be gassed and, soon afterwards – 'Israel Nazi state' – into Nazis again. This is another version of a 'song' composed in Europe, before topping the charts in Arab nations and being sung with gusto by the demonstrators in Amsterdam.

New Dutch and the Shoah

And: why? What does the whole Holocaust, with its gas chambers and other trap-pings, mean to the Muslim population in Europe, more specifically those who came to live in the Netherlands during the last decades – like other immigrants referred to as 'New Dutch' – and particularly those who feel called upon to chant 'Jews to the gas'? With few exceptions, World War II has not affected their parents or grand-parents or themselves. There is a cynical paradox here. On the one hand, immigrant

²⁵The Vrijzinnig Protestantse Radio Omroep became – since the end of the sixties – Netherlands' most progressive and innovative radio and television network.

groups obtaining their information and entertainment often from Arabic stations, where anti-Zionism, antisemitism and anti-Israel rhetoric are inextricably linked on the broadcasts, readily embrace antisemitism. On the other hand, playing the anti-semitism ticket now denotes integration and acculturation. The apparent intent is to hit the West in its own frame of reference for right and wrong: a very sensitive spot. This is illustrated by the response from the Arab European League (AEL) to the Danish Mohammed cartoons that deeply aggrieved Muslims worldwide. The AEL circulated several cartoons of its own in 2006. One suggests that the figure of six million murdered Jews is grossly overestimated, but that the Jews have an interest in 'attaining' this figure. This cartoon, posted again in 2009 on the website of the Dutch AEL chapter, has instigated various lawsuits. Most recently, in April 2010, the court in Utrecht found the cartoon to be especially hurtful but acquitted the AEL of insulting the 'Jewish share of the population'. The court ruled that freedom of expression – the principle invoked by the AEL, intrinsically a sign of integration – should prevail. In August 2010 the case was heard again, this time on appeal. The appeals court in Arnhem labelled the cartoon 'unnecessarily grievous' and ordered the AEL to pay a penalty of 2,500 Euros, of which 1,500 suspended.²⁶

The cartoon is obviously an attempt to trivialise or even deny the Shoah. The question is: why this of all possible responses to ridiculing Islam? How does the murder of Jews relate to mocking the prophet Mohammed? First, the Jews, as well as the Shoah (and its memory), are the Achilles heel of the West. This cannot have escaped any of the 'new Dutch.' The West has followed up by sanctifying what was initially its supreme failure. The AEL argued that 'if you trample on what is holy to us, we will drag what is holy to you through the mud.' In addition, the League proclaims – with a view to Israel and the Palestinians – that the time has come to force Jews to make way for the Palestinians in the hierarchy of suffering. 'Old' Dutch increasingly share this view. Finally: Dutch Muslims prefer to identify with an Islamic or Arab minority group such as the Palestinians – suppressed by the Other, The Jew – rather than with an Arab-Islamic underdog suffering from repression by its 'own' elite (Gans 2006).

Conclusion

To conclude on a familiar note: *les extrêmes se touchent*. In a second AEL cartoon, entitled *Hitler goes Dutroux* [The Belgian Marc Dutroux was sentenced in 2004 to life imprisonment for kidnapping, raping and murdering six young girls], we see Hitler in bed with Anne Frank, telling her: 'Write this one in your diary Anne.' This typical example of secondary pornographic antisemitism suggests a sexual relationship between the Jewish victim or any Jew and the Nazi: clearly a perverted relationship. A remarkable meeting of the minds between the adversary of assimilation,

²⁶ See e.g. "Arabisch Europese Liga beboet om Auschwitz-cartoon." Trouw, August 19, 2010; Court of Arnhem 19 August 2010, LJN BN4204 & BN4206.

the vehemently anti-Zionist AEL founder and Antwerp resident of Lebanese descent Abou Jahjah, and Theo van Gogh, who excelled in both pornographic antisemitism and Islamophobia. Van Gogh had decried Abou Jahjah as 'the Prophet's pimp' (Gogh 2004b). Who could have imagined that Jahjah would reach out to Van Gogh posthumously by translating his criticism of the West, of Jews and of Israel into imagery in the style of Van Gogh? Jahjah did not design the cartoon: it is by his kindred spirit Abdou Bouzerda, raised in the Netherlands and chairman of the AEL's Dutch chapter since 2008. He drew both of the contested cartoons (Gans 2006; OBA Live 2009).

And then there is Theo van Gogh, murdered by the Muslim extremist Mohammed Bouyeri in November 2004. The horrific murder was instigated by Van Gogh's role in directing the controversial anti-Islam cinematographic pamphlet *Submission* by the Dutch mp and Islam critic Ayaan Hirsi Ali. Van Gogh's assassin left behind an open letter, directly addressing Hirsi Ali and indirectly addressing all residents of the Netherlands. His venom targeted not only the apostate Muslim Hirsi Ali and the despicable West, but also the Jews, who were said to dominate Dutch politics. The man (Job Cohen) that Van Gogh had decried as an NSB member was similarly vilified by Bouyeri. 'What do you think of the fact that the mayor in Amsterdam subscribes to an ideology that allows Jews to lie to non-Jews?' This aspect of the murder trial received minimal media exposure. As Van Gogh probably did with his goat fornicators, Bouyeri presumably found his argument online – in his case, on an Islamist website, where antisemitic interpretations of the Talmud draw many hits. In the present era of globalisation, Internet is exceptionally effective for disseminating antisemitism, cross-linking the most discrepant groups and individuals. Antisemitism is multi-functional: There is something in it for everyone.

References

- Adorno, Theodor. 1971. *Erziehung Nach Auschwitz*. In *Erziehung zur Mündigkeit. Vorträge und Gespräche mit Hellmut Becker 1959–1969*, 88–104. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Beller, Steven. 1997. "Pride and prejudice or sense and sensibility"? How reasonable was anti-semitism in Vienna, 1880–1939? In *Essential outsiders: Chinese and Jews in the modern transformation of Southeast Asia and Central Europe*, ed. Daniel Chirot and Anthony Reid, 99–124. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Benz, Wolfgang. 2002. *Zwischen Antisemitismus und Philosemitismus: Juden in Deutschland nach 1945*. In *Ich bin geliebt – warum?: Juden in Deutschland, heute*, ed. Katja Behrens. Gerlingen: Bleicher.
- Bergmann, Werner, and Rainer Erb. 1991. *Antisemitismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Ergebnisse der empirischen Forschung von 1946–1989*. Opladen: Leske/Budrich.
- Bregstein, Philo. 2007. *Antisemitisme in Zijn Hedendaagse Variaties*. Amsterdam: Mets & Schilt.
- Burg, Avraham. 2008. *The Holocaust is over, we must rise from its ashes*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Chazan, Robert. 1997. *Medieval stereotypes and modern antisemitism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Cidi Israel Nieuwsbrief. 2000. *Midden-Oosten-crisis doet antisemitisme toenemen*. <http://www.cidi.nl/isnbr/2000/hoofd3-1700.html>.

- Cutler, Allan, and Helen Elmquist Cutler. 1986. *The Jew as ally of the Muslim: Medieval roots of anti-semitism*. Notre Dame.: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Davidović, Marija, Jaap van Donselaar, Peter P. Rodrigues, and Willem Wagenaar. 2008. Het Extremrechtse En Discriminatoire Gehalte Van De PVV. In *Monitor Racisme En Extremrechts: Achtste Rapportage*, ed. Peter R. Rodrigues and Willem Wagenaar, 167–198. Amsterdam: Anne Frank Stichting/Universiteit Leiden.
- EenVandaag. 2009. De Neus Van Clairly’: De Beelden. *EenVandaag*. <http://www.eenvandaag.nl/weblogs/post/33134>.
- Eickhoff, Martijn, Barbara Henkes, and Frank van Vree. 2010. De Verleiding Van Een Grietze Geschiedschrijving: Morele Waarden in Historische Voorstellingen. *Tijdschrift Voor Geschiedenis* 123(3): 322–339.
- Friedländer, Saul. 2007. *Nazi-Duitsland En De Joden*. Amsterdam: Nieuw Amsterdam.
- Gans, Evelien. 1994. *Gojse Nijd & Joods Narcisme: Over De Verhouding Tussen Joden En niet-Joden in Nederland*. Amsterdam: Arena.
- Gans, Evelien. 1999. De Kleine Verschillen Die Het Leven Uitmaken: Een Historische Studie Naar Joodse Sociaal-democraten En Socialistisch-zionisten in Nederland. Amsterdam: Vassallucci.
- Gans, Evelien. 2002. Vandaag Hebben Ze Niets, Maar Morgen Bezitten Ze Weer Een Tientje: Antisemitische Stereotypen in Bevrijd Nederland. In *Polderschouw: Terugkeer En Opvang Na De Tweede Wereldoorlog: Regionale Verschillen*, ed. Conny Kristel, 313–353. Amsterdam: B. Bakker.
- Gans, Evelien. 2003a. Gojse Broodnijd: De Strijd Tussen Joden En Niet-joden Rond De Naoorlogse Winkelsluitingswet 1945–1951. In *Met Alle Geweld: Botsingen En Tegenstellingen in Burgerlijk Nederland*, ed. Conny Kristel, 195–213. Amsterdam: Balans.
- Gans, Evelien. 2003b. *Wat Is Het Verschil Tussen Een Joodje En Een Broodje? Antisemitische Stereotypen Vroeger En Nu*. Amsterdam: Anne Frank Stichting.
- Gans, Evelien. 2003c. De Joodse Almacht: Hedendaags Antisemitisme. *Vrij Nederland*, November 29. <http://www.engageonline.org.uk/blog/article.php?id=294>.
- Gans, Evelien. 2006. De Jood Als Globaliserings Product: De Ael-cartoons. *De Groene Amsterdammer*, February 24. http://www.engageonline.org.uk/journal/index.php?journal_id=10&article_id=37.
- Gans, Evelien. 2007. Antisemitisme: Evolutionair En Multifunctioneel. Amsterdam: Anne Frank Stichting.
- Gans, Evelien. 2010a. Ischa Meijer, De Soldaat Van Oranje En De Fassbinderaffaire: Zere Plekken in De Naoorlogse Verhouding Tussen Joden En Niet-joden in Nederland. In *Joods Nederland Na 1945. Een Veelkleurig Portret*, ed. Hetty Berg and Bart Wallet. Zwolle: Waanders Uitgeverij.
- Gans, Evelien. 2010b. Iedereen Een Beetje Slachtoffer, Iedereen Een Beetje Dader: De Nederlandse Historikerstreit over De Grietze Oorlog. *De Groene Amsterdammer*. <http://www.groene.nl/2010/4/iedereen-een-beetje-slachtoffer-iedereen-een-beetje-dader>.
- Gans, Evelien. 2011a. Over Gaskamers, Joodse Nazi’s En Neuzen. In *Monitor Racisme & Extremisme. Negende Rapportage*, ed. Peter R. Rodrigues and Jaap van Donselaar. Amsterdam: Pallas Publications.
- Gans, Evelien. 2011b. Eigentlich waren doch alle ein bisschen Täter und Opfer... Nivellierungstendenzen und sekundärer Antisemitismus im Geschichtsbild des niederländischen Historikers Chris Van Der Heijden. In *Täter und Tabu: Grenzen der Toleranz in deutschen und niederländischen Geschichtsdebatten*, ed. Nicole Colin, Matthias N. Lorenz, and Joachim Umlauf, 33–49. 1. Auflage. vol. 25. Schriften der Bibliothek für Zeitgeschichte. Essen: Klartext.
- Gans, Evelien. 2011c. De Strijd Tegen Het Antisemitisme Is Verworden Tot Ideologie Tegen Moslims. *NRC Handelsblad*, January 8.
- Gerrits, Andre. 2009. *The myth of Jewish communism: A historical interpretation*. New York: P.I.E. Peter Lang.
- Gerstenfeld, Manfred. 2010. *Het Verval: Joden in Een Stuurloos Nederland*. Amsterdam: Van Praag.
- Gilman, Sander. 1991. *The Jew’s body*. New York: Routledge.
- Gogh, Theo van. 1984. Een Messias Zonder Kruis (enige Kanttekeningen Bij Leon De Winter). *Moviola: Een Tijdschrift Tot Rust En Vreugde in Film En Cultuur* 1:22.

- Gogh, Theo van. 1994a. Sterren Stralen Overal. *hp/De Tijd*, November 4.
- Gogh, Theo van. 1994b. *Folia*, November 25.
- Gogh, Theo van. 2004a. De Boel Bij Elkaar Houden. *Metro*, March 13.
- Gogh, Theo van. 2004b. Onze Burgemeester. *Metro*, October 22.
- Heijden, Chris van der. 2001. *Grijs Verleden: Nederland En De Tweede Wereldoorlog*. 4. druk. Amsterdam: Contact.
- Heijden, Chris van der. 2003a. De Oorlog Is Voorgevoerd Voorbij. *Vrij Nederland*. April 26.
- Heijden, Chris van der. 2003b. Het Einde Van De Historische Correctheid. *Vrij Nederland*, December 6.
- Heijden, Chris van der. 2006. *Joodse NSB'ers: De Vergeten Geschiedenis Van Villa Bouchina in Doetinchem*. Utrecht: Bk18.
- Heijden, Chris van der. 2007. Beschouw Wilders Als Een Democraat. *Trouw*, March 22
- Heijden, Chris van der. 2008. *Israel, Een Onherstelbare Vergissing*. Amsterdam: Contact.
- Hertzberg, Arthur. 1993. Is anti-semitism dying out? *The New York Review of Books*, June 24.
- Hirsh, David. 2007. *Anti-zionism and antisemitism: Cosmopolitan reflections*. New Haven: Yale Initiative for the Interdisciplinary Study of Antisemitism.
- Hulsman, Bernard. 2005a. Getto's Op Het Web. Op Internet Heeft Elke Groep Zijn Eigen Waarheid. *NRC Handelsblad*, January 8.
- Hulsman, Bernard. 2005b. Khomeiny En De Geitenneukers. *NRC Handelsblad*, January 9.
- Human Rights Watch. 2002. Israel, the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the Palestinian authority territories. Jenin: IDF Military Operations. Human Rights Watch. <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/israel3/>.
- Kerres, Michel. 2010. Populisten EU: Een Familie Met Veel Verschillen. Rechts Splijt Politieke Midden. *NRC Handelsblad*, September 25.
- Krebbers, Eric, and Jan Tas. 2002. Grootste Manifestatie Van Antisemitisme Sinds 1945. *De Fabel Van De Illegaal* (52/53). <http://www.doorbraak.eu/gebladerte/10834f52.htm>.
- Kris, Jeroen van der. 2001. Iedereen Is Tot Alles in Staat. Chris Van Der Heijden Rekent Af Met Het Goed/fout-denken. *NRC Handelsblad*, March 3.
- Kuipers, Giseline. 1997. Van Klassieke Jodenmoppen Naar Zieke Joodse Moppen: Het Veranderende Beeld Van Joden in Nederlandse Moppen. *Volkskundig Bulletin* 23(1): 29–50.
- Kuper, Simon. 2000. Ajax, De Joden, Nederland. *Hard Gras: Voetbaltijdschrift Voor Lezers*, 22 March.
- Leibovici, Solange. 1995. Het Pornografisch Antisemitisme. *De Groene Amsterdammer*, May 17.
- Meijer, Remco, and Martin Sommer. 2010. Martin Bosma: 'Ik Wil Bewijzen Dat Hitler Een Socialist Was'. *De Volkskrant*, September 25.
- Moors, Hans, et al. 2009. *Polarisatie En Radicalisering in Nederland: Een Verkenning Van De Stand Van Zaken in 2009*. Tilburg: IVA beleidsonderzoek en advies.
- OBA Live. 2009. Hoofdgast: Abdou Bouzerda. *OBA Live*. <http://www.obalive.nl/default.aspx?IntEntityId=1015>.
- Rensmann, Lars, and Julius H. Schoeps (eds.). 2008. *Feindbild Judentum: Antisemitismus in Europa*. Berlin: VBB Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg.
- Schönbach, Peter. 1961. *Reaktionen auf die antisemitische Welle im Winter 1959/60*. Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt.
- Segev, Tom. 1993. *The seventh million: The Israelis and the Holocaust*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Van Arkel, Dick. 1991. Genealogisch Verband Van Antisemitische Vooroordelen. In *Wat Is Antisemitisme?: Een Benadering Vanuit Vier Disciplines*, ed. Dick van Arkel et al., 54. Kampen: J.H. Kok.
- Verhey, Elma. 1991. *Om Het Joodse Kind*. Amsterdam: Nijgh & Van Ditmar.
- Vree, Frank van. 2009. De Dynamiek Van De Herinnering. Nederland in Een Internationale Context. In *De Dynamiek Van De Herinnering: Nederland En De Tweede Wereldoorlog in Een Internationale Context*, ed. Frank van Vree and Rob van der Laarse, 17–40. Amsterdam: Bakker.
- Vree, Frank van. 2010. Beroep Op 'joods-christelijke Traditie' Lijkt Vanzelfsprekend Maar Is Pervers. *NRC Handelsblad*, March 27.

Perceptions of the Holocaust Among Young Muslims in Berlin, Paris and London

Günther Jikeli

Introduction

Private perceptions of the Holocaust are often different from the public discourse of the Holocaust. What are sources of knowledge about the Holocaust for young European Muslims? What is the role of their ethnic or religious background? What do they know about the Holocaust and what are possible biased attitudes and how are they voiced? What are the rationales?

It can be assumed that European Muslims see the Holocaust less central in their history and that the discourses within Muslim families are generally less influenced both by the history of their families during the Second World War and by a collective feeling of guilt than the majority of other Europeans whose parents or grandparents lived in Europe during the Second World War. Most European Muslims come from countries that played only a minor role in the Holocaust and from which no or only relatively few Jews were deported to German death camps in Eastern Europe.¹ However, in many European Muslims countries of origin, Holocaust denial is widespread within the mainstream, the Holocaust is often portrayed in an antisemitic way as a tool used by Israel, conspiracy theories about an alleged Nazi-Zionist collaboration

¹ Bosnia is the exception to the rule. The history of Albania shows that some Muslims played an extraordinary role in saving Jews from deportation despite German occupation from 1943–1944 while others collaborated with the National Socialists in the persecution of Jews. For a debate on the role of Arab Muslims during the Holocaust see (Satloff (2006), Nordbruch (2009), Cüppers and Mallmann (2006).

G. Jikeli (✉)
e-mail: g.jikeli@gmail.com

are widespread and Israel is equated with Nazism.² The level of open Holocaust denial in some mass media from Muslim-majority countries is not accepted in European countries as the case of the Turkish daily *Vakit* shows. *Vakit* was printed in Germany for its readers in Germany until 2005 when it was banned by the German authorities for its denial of the Holocaust, antisemitic and anti-Western propaganda (Kreuzberger Initiative gegen Antisemitismus 2004).

Incidents such as the reluctance or boycott of European Muslim organisations in participating in Holocaust commemorations³ and reports from teachers of difficulties teaching about the Holocaust indicate problematic views of the Holocaust of some European Muslims (Brenner 2004). In Germany, *Die Zeit* published a survey on views of the Holocaust of 400 people of Turkish origin in January 2010. 68% admitted that they know little about the Holocaust and 40% said that people of Turkish background living in Germany should not be concerned studying the Holocaust (*Die Zeit* 2010). A poll on Muslims in the UK from 2006 shows that only a third believe that the Holocaust happened as history teaches and 17% that it has been exaggerated (GfK NOP 2006). A number of polls and studies show that antisemitic attitudes are more widespread among Muslims in Europe than among the respective average in society (The Pew Global Attitudes Project 2006, 42–43; Brettfeld and Wetzels 2007, 274–275; The Living History Forum 2004, 45, 135–136; Elchardus 2011; Frindte et al. 2012, 245–247).⁴

This paper examines views of the Holocaust based on in-depth interviews with 117 young Muslims between 14 and 27 in Berlin, Paris and London from 2005 to 2007. The interviewees in each city roughly represent the ethnic minority groups in the respective country, that is, in Berlin the majority of interviewees have a Turkish heritage, in Paris a North African and in London a (South-West) Asian background. Interviewees were selected randomly in public places.⁵

² See Chaps. 5 and 6 by Esther Webman and Rifat N. Bali in this volume. See also Litvak and Webman (2009). In a number of Turkish newspapers Israel is frequently equated with the Nazis and it is claimed that the Holocaust is turned into an industry to act as a cover for all of Israel's atrocities, to a level uncommon in German, French and British newspapers (Bali 2009). To the best of my knowledge, no studies have examined the discourses about the Holocaust in South-Asian countries, the countries of origin of most Muslims in Britain. There is an encouraging development in Morocco today. The Moroccan king publicly spoke of the importance of Holocaust commemoration for the first time in March 2009 (Mohammed and Roi du Maroc 2009) and, independently from the Monarchy, a group of Moroccan educators and activists visited Yad Vashem in Israel for the first time in 2009 (Maddy-Weitzman 2010). The Aladdin Project launched a first-time series of public lectures on the Holocaust in Muslim countries in 2010 (Projet Aladin 2010).

³ The Muslim Council of Britain has repeatedly and explicitly boycotted the national Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration in the UK. See also Mike Whine's and Philip Spencer's and Sara Valentina Di Palma's chapters in this volume (Chaps. 4 and 7).

⁴ Some scholars have disputed that even attacks against Jews and Jewish property by Muslims are a sign of antisemitism and (mis-)interpret this as an expression of political opinion against Israeli policies. See e.g. Klug (2004), Silverstein (2008).

⁵ For more details about the interviews and methods of this study see Jikeli (2012a).

In the following sections I first give a brief description of the basic knowledge most interviewees have about the Holocaust and of their sources of knowledge. Second, I present participants' doubts and conspiracy theories about the Holocaust. Third, I discuss contextualisations and comparisons of the Holocaust with other atrocities; some are biased, such as equations of Israel with the Nazis and equations of the suffering of Palestinians with the Holocaust. Last, I examine the emotional reactions to the Holocaust, from condemnations of the Holocaust and empathy with the victims to approval and feeling common ground with the perpetrators on the basis of Jew-hatred.

Shared Basic Knowledge of the Holocaust

Interviewees often did not know the meaning of the terms Holocaust, Shoah or Auschwitz at first but, as the proceeding conversations revealed, most had heard of the term Holocaust and some mentioned the term Auschwitz spontaneously themselves.⁶ Few are familiar with the term Shoah. Many do not know the exact year when the Second World War started and ended and some mix up historical events as different as the Second World War and the fall of the Berlin wall. A flagrant lack of knowledge also emerged occasionally with the surmise that the National Socialists killed Jews for religious reasons or with questions such as, "*was it a tough, [...] equal fight?*" as Malik,⁷ an interviewee from London asked. But most interviewees do have an idea about the historical fact of the murder of the European Jews by the National Socialists: in summary, the basic knowledge of most interviewees include that Jews were persecuted and killed in Germany in vast numbers during the Second World War.⁸ The Nazis and, particularly the dictator Hitler, are identified as the perpetrators. The fact that many Jews were gassed and burnt in concentration camps is also part of widespread knowledge. However, the knowledge about the Holocaust is often vague and not an important issue for the participants.⁹ Bashkar from London has very limited knowledge of the Holocaust, even though he remembered important aspects such as the killing of many Jews in gas chambers. But consider his initial reaction to the question if he knows the meaning of the word Holocaust.

⁶ A few interviewees in France associated the term Holocaust with a group of French rappers who call themselves "Holocauste", such as Sabri from Paris who was asked: "*Have you heard already of the word Holocaust?*" Upon which he answered: "*This a rapper among us [...]. But I don't know what it means. What does it mean?*"

⁷ All names of interviewees are pseudonyms. The names are chosen from a list of common names among people of their particular ethnic backgrounds.

⁸ Interviewees are generally not aware of the fact that most Jews were actually killed outside Germany.

⁹ This is also the case for many non-Muslim Europeans. The authors of a report on Holocaust Education in OSCE countries noted a "Holocaust fatigue" among some students (OSCE/ODIHR 2006).

Interviewer: *Do you know the word Holocaust?*

Bashkar: *Holocaust, yeah. It's that place, innit?*

Interviewer: *No, it's not a place.*

Bashkar: *Oh yeah, it's the Jews, they were killed, innit? [...] Millions.*

(Bashkar from London)

Bashkar's knowledge of the Holocaust is not easily accessible, a sign that it is not an important issue for him. Many others have much more detailed knowledge of the forms of persecution and killings of Jews, the racist ideology of an "Aryan" race and about the Second World War. Many details are also known about the person Adolf Hitler such as that he committed suicide, that he was Austrian by birth and an unsuccessful painter. And, of course, interviewees know of Hitler's distinguished moustache. Some put the Holocaust in a context of a long history of discrimination and persecution of the Jews, the blame of Jews for the "Black Death" or the murder of Jesus Christ. Only very few interviewees are explicitly disinterested in the history of the Holocaust.

Sources of Knowledge

Interviewees referred to school as the most important source of knowledge about the Holocaust, saying that they had dealt with Hitler, the Second World War and the Holocaust and some visited memorial sites with school and met a Holocaust survivor.¹⁰ However, the ideological driving forces for the extermination of Jewry are often reduced to prejudices and intolerance in general. Bahaar recalled what he had learnt in school about the reasons for the Holocaust:

In lessons I learned that it's just basically a process where lots of Jews got killed because of the reason that they were different and that they didn't want them there.

(Bahaar from London)

This generally widespread perception ignores the fact that Jews were made different and that antisemitic and xenophobic attitudes are only partly the same (Salzborn 2010).

Other frequently cited sources of knowledge include television, particularly on the history of the Warsaw Ghetto, Hitler and the persecution and murder of Jews and the Second World War. It is noteworthy that one interviewee from Berlin visited the former concentration camp Sachsenhausen with the youth group of the local mosque. Friends and relatives, books, films and the Internet were only occasionally

¹⁰ Some gave examples how they have dealt with the Holocaust in school. Çeto from Berlin for example reported that he had given a presentation in school about the Holocaust. Mousa, Ismail and Suleiman, also from Berlin, met a Holocaust survivor in school. Diaba from Paris mentioned a project with his school remembering Jewish students of his college who had been deported to concentration camps by putting up a plaque of remembrance at his school. Masmud from Paris visited the memorial sites in Drancy with school. Neoy from London said that he saw a video about Anne Frank in school.

mentioned as sources of knowledge on the Holocaust. However, these sources, including “what they have heard”, can have an important impact on questioning public narratives of the Holocaust such as taught in school.

Of course, the way knowledge is presented is related to various interpretations and explanations of the Holocaust. Salih from Berlin, for example, gave a simplifying account of the Holocaust in a nutshell:

Hitler became politician and when times were bad he lay all the blame on the Jews and then he just started to kill them all, to gas them.

(Salih from Berlin)

He portrayed Hitler as the only responsible person and used the theory that Jews were made scapegoats for explaining the killing of the Jews. Both are prominent views on the Holocaust in Germany.¹¹

Doubts, Denial and Conspiracies About the Holocaust

Some interpretations, explanations and beliefs about the Holocaust amount to diminishing or even denial of the Holocaust. This often contradicts what interviewees have learnt in school. Three interviewees explicitly depicted the Holocaust as a myth altogether or said that far less than six million Jews were killed. Haroun is one of them. He is aware of the disparity of his beliefs and the narrative he was taught in school.

They are saying the Jews were killed and that. I don't know if that's true. This is what I was taught in school that they were deported, killed, some things. But I was told something else that there was an illness called typhus which spread everywhere and that's why they were burnt.

[...]

Anyway, I've heard in a political debate, they said that this was because of a strange disease, the images which were filmed, at least some of them [...] that was because of the disease which was called typhus [...] which spread across Germany at a certain time. Everywhere, a bit everywhere, well, there was in the concentration camps, I don't know, around the camps, or in the train or... Everybody got this disease, this people had to be burnt.

(Haroun from Paris)

Haroun, a Frenchman of Algerian descent, doubts that Jews were killed systematically and labels the Holocaust elsewhere as “nonsense” and a “state secret”. He thinks that Jews and others had to be burnt because of typhus. Haroun refers to two narratives: the one he has learned in school and which he doubts and another one which he “was told” and which he feels being confirmed in a political debate, probably on French TV, about typhus in concentration camps.

Aban, of South-Asian origin from London, is another example of someone who denies the Holocaust. He is convinced that “*Hitler did not kill six million Jews. [...] He killed about six hundred thousand.*” He doubts the information he has learnt in

¹¹ See for example Knopp (2004).

school, saying that pictures of shaven-headed people in “those jackets” in concentration camps could be staged and that the information students get in school is probably biased. Aban gave three arguments for his doubts on the number of six million. His first argument is that there are so many Jews today that he cannot believe that, as he said, more than half of the Jews were killed.¹² This argument hints to a widespread overestimation of the number of Jews today. Secondly, he used the film “Schindler’s List” as evidence that many Jews were saved which confirms that a film about the Holocaust focussing on the rescue of Jews can be used for a misconception of the Holocaust.¹³ And Aban’s third argument is that “*to deal with six million Jews, and then the rest of the world. He can’t [...] It would take more than the population of Germany to do that.*” This can be a result of sheer disbelief about the scale of the murderous enterprise or a biased overestimation of the power of these six million Jewish civilians. Interestingly, he claimed that he has found out this “truth” by himself based on “common sense.” He thus presented himself as someone who has made up his own mind and who has revealed the truth against the official, allegedly biased, narrative from school and TV. This is a typical element of conspiracy theories.

Neoy, another interviewee of Asian background, knows about the Holocaust Memorial Day but he is convinced that “only” close to a million Jews were killed, referring to a book by a “*journalist that actually investigated the killing*” and to “*official statistics,*” possibly mentioned in that book.¹⁴ Most interestingly, he stated in that context: “*I think there is an elite who says what does and what doesn’t go.*” He thus believes that the public discourse on the Holocaust including the Holocaust Memorial Day is dictated by a small group which he did not name. He can explain the discrepancy of the public discourse and his “sources” with the help of this conspiracy theory.

A few others voiced doubts about the Holocaust, which can also be seen as a form of Holocaust denial (Lipstadt 1993). Manoj from London of South-Asian origin, however, voiced such strong doubts that he portrayed the Holocaust as a fictitious narrative:

What a lot of people are saying is, did the Holocaust exist or not? A lot of things don’t add up. They are saying 6 million Jews got massacred, but were there 6 million Jews in Europe at that time? [...] So that’s why they are teaching [...] they want to make it so that people believe the Holocaust really did happen. And there’s not a shadow of doubt in that. That’s why they’re teaching everyone from school.

(Manoj from London)

Manoj tried to present the results of research on the Holocaust as contradictorily by casting doubts on well established facts. In order to back up his doubts he referred to “what people are saying”, similar to Haroun from Paris quoted above. Manoj believes that “they” have an agenda teaching the Holocaust in school.

¹² More than 60% of the Jews in Europe were killed. See Gribetz (1994).

¹³ One of Claude Lanzmann’s objections to “Schindler’s List” was that the history of the Shoah must get distorted when the focus of the film is on the salvation of 1300 Jews while the overwhelming majority of the Jews was not saved (Lanzmann 1994; Walter 1998).

¹⁴ Unfortunately, he did not provide more details about this source.

Nader of North-African descent also had his doubts both about Hitler and the Holocaust. He claimed that nobody knows if and how Hitler died and referred to a narrative from “back home”, meaning Morocco despite his British citizenship. Thus he is aware of a discourse in Morocco about the Holocaust which he values and which differs from and even contradicts the discourse in Britain. He distanced himself from the fact that Jews were burnt, both by indirect speech, portraying it as a rumour and also emotionally by using vulgar language: “*We heard that Hitler used to barbecue Jewish people.*” He then added another fundamental argument for the disbelief of what happened during the Shoah: “*I can’t tell you he is a killer, because I wasn’t with him. I wasn’t there sitting down with Hitler having a tea and now he tells me about his story!*” (Nader from London). Nader thereby claimed that one can only be sure of historical facts if the events are of direct experience (or told face-to-face by those responsible for historical developments) and that all other accounts of history are to be doubted.

These examples indicate that it is not a lack of knowledge which leads to doubts or denial of the Holocaust. The interviewees are aware of the fact that the public discourse contradicts their beliefs. They do not accept the public discourse. They choose to believe in a narrative of denial which they have encountered on TV, in a book, as a rumour, or “back home” or even claim that “common sense” in the search of truth has brought them to these conclusions. Casting doubts on an aspect of the Holocaust is used to question the Holocaust as a historical fact in general. In order to bridge the gap between the public discourse and their narrative, interviewees believe the public discourse to be biased or staged and revert to conspiracy theories.

Rumours that Adolf Hitler was Jewish or had Jewish ancestors are a recurrent trope.¹⁵ They are referred to as rumours “what people say” but also to what they have learned in school. Bilal for example said about Hitler:

He’s an Austrian. His mother – she is Austrian and Jewish [...] and he wants to take revenge [...]. This is what they told us in school.

(Bilal from Paris)

We cannot know what exactly Bilal was taught in school. But what he has learned, and what he refers to as knowledge from school, is that Hitler’s mother was Jewish and that Hitler wanted to take “revenge”, for what we do not know. Portraying Hitler as being related to Jews, however, suggests that he knew Jews well and had his reasons for his Jew-hatred or even that there was a collaboration between Hitler and Jews. The latter interpretation is taken by Ümit of Turkish origin. He believes that Hitler was “Halbjuden” (half-Jewish) and collaborated with those who wanted to establish “a Greater Israel”. He portrays Hitler as a “weapon” for this goal, eliminating all the weak and poor Jews who were “useless” for the establishment of a “Greater Israel” and not killing the educated and rich. And he takes his perception that there are mostly rich and influential Jews today who stick together and try to advance “Greater Israel” as evidence for his theory. Hence, he accuses an alleged leadership

¹⁵ Since the mid-1920 rumours say that Adolf Hitler had Jewish ancestry. This has been proved false. See Kershaw (1999).

of Jews and Israelis for the Holocaust and portrays Hitler as a victim of this conspiracy. It should be noted that Ümit uses Nazi-terminology such as the word “Halbjude” and accepts the view of the National Socialists that “*those who were gassed, they were simply good for nothing*” (Ümit from Berlin).

Comparing the Holocaust to Other Atrocities

Equating the Holocaust to the Israeli treatment of Palestinians is an antisemitic trope (EUMC/ FRA 2005). Some surveys have used it as an item for contemporary antisemitic attitudes.¹⁶ How did interviewees compare the Holocaust to other alleged and real atrocities? Many equate the Holocaust to other historical events or draw inappropriate analogies of the Holocaust not only to the sufferings of Palestinians but also to the Iraq war and equate Bush with Hitler, the Holocaust with the persecution of Muslims or foreigners today, with slavery, AIDS and with the colonial history of France. The ways these analogies are drawn significantly diminish the Holocaust as demonstrated below. Deborah Lipstadt described this as a form of antisemitism and “soft-core Holocaust denial.”¹⁷ The analogies also show that the term Holocaust is often used merely as a reference to atrocities in general, despite knowledge about the murder of six million Jews.

Equating the Sufferings of Palestinians with the Holocaust

What is the rationale of equating sufferings of Palestinians with the Holocaust? One precondition seems to be the perception of a deep suffering of “the Palestinians” in the hand of “the Israelis” or “the Jews”. A recurrent theme is the killing of children which, in the eyes of some participants, amounts to atrocities like those committed in the Holocaust. “*It’s more or less the same thing. They kill the children,*” said Hamza from Paris. Ismail from Berlin, however, acknowledged that Palestinians are not gassed but emphasised the allegedly equally cruel abuses that Palestinians have to suffer and referred to Arab news channels. The argument that Palestinians in the Gaza strip are imprisoned is also used as an argument to justify an equation. Consider Çeto’s statement.

Well, I have heard, that many Jews are accused or attacked because they went through the Holocaust and now they do it with the Palestinians by blocking up the Gaza-Strip, theoretically.

(Çeto from Berlin)

¹⁶In 2004 about half of the German population thought that Israel’s treatment of the Palestinians is basically the same as the treatment of Jews by the Nazis in the ‘Third Reich’ (Heitmeyer 2005). The number dropped to 30% in another survey. (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2007)

¹⁷Quoted by Jonny Paul. “Holocaust Scholar Warns of New ‘Soft-core’ Denial.” *Jerusalem Post*, February 6, 2007.

Çeto's allegation that the Jews today are the perpetrators of similar atrocities like those of which they were victims in the Holocaust has been described as a projection of guilt within the German context (Rensmann 2005). However, this cannot be his motivation because he does not consider himself German. His claim that he has heard this allegation hints to the influence of this context in Germany on his perception of the Jews and the Holocaust. The use of the antisemitic topos that Jews allegedly talk too much about the Holocaust points in the same direction. This topos can be related to the wish not to be reminded of the responsibility of Germans (Rensmann 2005) or other Europeans. Necet concluded: *"They kill the people like the Nazis killed the Jews, there are no differences. So the Jews cannot complain about what Hitler did with them when they do it themselves"* (Necet from Berlin).

Such patterns from a discourse of secondary antisemitism as an unreflected rejection of guilt feelings are endorsed mostly by participants from Germany. It demonstrates the influence of this discourse also on people with migrant backgrounds who have no feelings of collective guilt vis-a-vis the Holocaust. Another recurrent aspect of Necet's view is that "the Jews" are seen as one unity, conflating not only Israelis with Jews but also the Jewish victims of the Holocaust more than 60 years ago with Israelis today.

Equations of the Holocaust with the treatment of the Palestinians insinuate evil intentions on the Israeli side and misrepresent the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Sharif for example thinks that the methods of the Holocaust and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are different but that the underlying attitudes of disrespect and dehumanisation are the same: *"Regarding the disrespect or the disdain it is just the same. Just as the Nazis at the time didn't regard Jews as human beings, the Israelis don't really regard the Palestinians as human beings"* (Sharif from Berlin), accuses Sharif the Israelis. Similarly, Bahaar thinks that "it" is similar *"because the idea of it is roughly the same, I mean, just killing someone because you think you're better or they're different or they're wrong..."* (Bahaar from London).

"It", the Holocaust, becomes a general term with the meaning of hatred against others.

Aba from London, of Ghanian-English origin, is somehow more cautious in his comparison. He said: *"I don't know if it's as blatant as it was during the Holocaust, but [...] it is kind of similar [...]. Can't just straight up say it's another Holocaust."* For him, it is a question of degree of blatantness of hatred; he does not see the particularity of the Holocaust. And thus he said about an Israeli politician whose speech he read: *"He's just trying to evoke an emotional response in the people, like saying how the Palestinians have bombed our women and children, like the typical stuff that I studied in history, like when Hitler would say certain things to evoke an emotional response."* He made no distinction in principal between delusional Nazi-propaganda about Jews allegedly threatening the Germans and a speech by an Israeli politician pointing out real threats of terrorism by Palestinians. What is more, the Holocaust becomes an empty metaphor, de-related to the systematic murder of European Jewry. This lack of understanding of the Holocaust enables equations with very different phenomena.

A confrontation with the fact that six million Jews were murdered can be met by an attempt to diminish the Holocaust. Bilal gave such an example when he explained

why he believes that what the Israelis do with the Palestinians is the same as what the Nazis did to the Jews:

Bilal: *Because [...] in Palestine they are still there the Israelis, they are beating [...] and there are always dead bodies, sometimes the guys are 14 years old, 13 years, they die there [...] Even kids are dying.*

Interviewer: *You said that the Nazis killed 6 Million Jews.*

Bilal: *Yeah, there are not only Jews, too.*

(Bilal from Paris)

His main argument for this equation is that Israelis are still in Palestine and that they hit and kill Palestinians, including children. The interviewer's objection that six million Jews were murdered in the Holocaust is met by diminishing the Holocaust. Noey even portrayed the Holocaust as a Jewish claim before he described the killings of Palestinians as "a present-day example of the Holocaust":

Before, the victims were the Jews, so they claimed, now, we see that the Jews are the oppressors because what is happening in Palestine, if you see the pictures of the Israelis, up-to-date weapons are killing these little Palestinian kids for throwing stones at them. And that is a present-day example of the Holocaust [...]. I think, Israel is playing the role that Hitler played.

(Noey from London)

It should be noted that his presentation of "the Jews" as perpetrators today and Hitler alone as the perpetrator of the Holocaust is a recurrent pattern as well as the image of modern Israeli soldiers fighting and killing Palestinian children, both among interviewees and the wider population.

Some even stated that the treatment of Palestinians is worse than the Holocaust. Khalil from Paris believes that "it" is worse because, he argues, "the Jews" want to kill all Muslims. Nirmal from Britain is not sure if the Jews intent to exterminate all the Palestinians but he is adamant that the Jews want to take over Palestine and the world:

But obviously unlike Hitler, Hitler did it alone. They're getting their help from America and this country. They're getting more help [...]. I am not sure whether they want to kill all the Palestinians. But I do know that they want to take over their country. Take over the world.

(Nirmal from London)

Again, "the Jews" are accused of atrocities but Hitler is seen as the only perpetrator of the Holocaust. Nirmal's perception of Israel perpetrating atrocities like the Holocaust with help from the United States and Britain is clearly tainted by antisemitic conspiracy theories.

Abhijit's comparison implies the antisemitic stereotype of the wandering Jew who has his place nowhere (Hasan-Rokem and Dundes 1986). He insists that "whatever Hitler did" to Jews was very different to how Palestinians are treated by Israel. He argues that while Hitler only "took out" the Jewish minority, Jews "kick out" the majority living in Palestine. In his own words:

It's not the same, because initially Jews then [did not belong] to German[y]. [...] They initially came from Egypt, right? Or the Middle East. [...] But whatever Hitler did [...] the majority were non-Jews. [...] And he was tryin' to take out the minority out of that area, or

off that state. But at this place, the impression I'm having [...] is that, the minority Jewish, that came to stay in a place for temporary basis which is Israel, which is not their home, are tryin' to kick out the land lords. In other words [...] they are tryin' to kick out the people, who actually own the place. See, it's a different thing.

(Abhijt from London)

Abhijt accepts the notion of the National Socialists that Jews do not belong to Germany. He believes that “the Jews” came from Egypt or the Middle East but he also sees Jews in Israel as strangers in a place owned by other people and thereby alludes to the image of Israel as a colonial state and to the image of the wandering Jew, belonging nowhere.

To conclude, equations of the Holocaust with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict imply the perception of deep sufferings of the Palestinians in the hands of the Israelis or “the Jews” who are accused of evil intentions. Such equations often come with antisemitic stereotypes and tropes such as Jews as child murderers, Jews talk too much about the Holocaust, the image of the wandering Jew and antisemitic conspiracy theories.

The meaning of the Holocaust, the systematic murder of European Jewry, is neglected and the term is used as a metaphor for atrocities. Equations of the Holocaust with the fate of Palestinians are rather rooted in hostile attitudes towards Jews and the emotional attachment to the struggle of Palestinians against Israel than in a lack of knowledge. Hostile attitudes towards Jews are a motive to diminish the Holocaust. The emotional attachment to “the Palestinians” is a motive to exaggerate sufferings of “the Palestinians” and to see them as victims only. Together, it facilitates an equation of the Holocaust and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The Topos of Jews Taking Revenge for the Holocaust with the Palestinians

Some participants from all three countries used the topos of Jews taking revenge for the Holocaust with the Palestinians. This rationale acknowledges the sufferings of Jews by the National Socialists, assumes that it led to a collective trauma and accuses the Jewish people today of taking this out on Palestinians. It alludes to the antisemitic trope of a “Jewish revenge” (Bergmann 1997, 316; Gerlich 2001). A psychological explanation seems plausible here: the own suppressed desire for revenge on various issues is projected onto Jews. The topos often comes with an equation of the Holocaust and the sufferings of Palestinians. Consider the three examples below, one from each country, which illustrate the three main patterns within this topos:

1. The Holocaust as an explanation for the evilness of Jews.
2. The accusation against Jews that they have not learnt from their own history of persecution but are looking for revenge.
3. The transference of alleged psychological mechanisms of individuals to a people.

Nader said that the Holocaust and the suffering of Palestinians are comparable and argued thereupon:

[They are] trying to revenge. Because as you are going to kill innocent kids and his family, that's what happened back with the Germans as well, Hitler. Why are you going to do that? Why are you going to bring the history back? [...] They still got that black dot in them heart.

(Nader from London)

Nader thus explained the evilness of Jews-killing-children and their black-heartedness with the collective trauma, presenting it as the impossible attempt to “bring back history”. The Holocaust becomes the reason for the evilness of Jews. Massoud deplored that Jews have not learnt from their own history of persecution but are looking for revenge:

One could have hoped that it served them as a lesson [...] what the Germans did to them to the Israelis. But in fact, what they are looking for, it's vengeance.

(Massoud from Paris)

The argument is contradictory in itself because the purported “vengeance” targets the Palestinians and not the Germans. Note that he blurred Israelis with Jews when he used the term Israelis.

Ismail took a different approach and drew an analogy to the education of children, assuming that violent patterns in families are repeated from generation to generation. He thus portrayed it is a natural mechanism that the Jews allegedly treat the Palestinians the way they were treated themselves.

Well because the way they were treated – for example, if my father constantly beats me, then I will also [...] beat my children [...]. And that is the same with the Jews, the people was treated that way and now they treat the Palestinians like that.

(Ismail from Berlin)

Ismail gave the clearest example of transferring alleged psychological mechanisms of individuals to a people. It shows that the perception of Jews as a unitary category is part of the rationale of this topos.

Analogies Between the Holocaust and the War in Iraq and Equations of the US-President with Hitler

The comparisons and equations are not limited to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Interviewees drew parallels between the Holocaust and the war in Iraq and compared Bush with Hitler. This is further evidence that the Holocaust serves as a metaphor for atrocities such as despicable killings of innocents in war while ignoring historical differences. Additionally, it demonstrates that such distorted views are not limited to perceptions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Some relate the war in Iraq to an alleged war against Muslims. The portrayal of the own group as victims is another motive of such equations. For Haroun, for example, Bush is a concealed racist which he takes as proof of his claim that Hitler is like the US-President George Bush.

Hitler is like Bush. It's the same [...]. In forty years we will step back and say 'ah yes, that was more or less the same thing [...], just that there were planes and tanks [...]. It's the same, you see, now there are just missiles, that's all, they go to Iraq and they are killing [...]. It's a so-called not-racist racist.

(Haroun from Paris)

Kashi and Bashkar declared that both Bush and Blair are today's Hitler because they are responsible for bombings and Kashi added: "*They're killing millions of Muslims, but they'll never say we did it*" (Kashi from London). Neoy who was quoted above saying that that there is "*a present-day example of the Holocaust*" in Palestine also claimed that there are similar concentration camps to those of National Socialism in Afghanistan and Iraq, operated by the Americans in which they hold prisoners. He even went one step further and accused the Americans of trying to annihilate the people in Iraq: "*The obvious conclusion is that [it] is their plan to wipe them all out. They're killing children every day. And, for example, when 1000 Iraqis got killed, the [...] Secretary of State [...], said, 'that's the price we're paying'*" (Neoy from London). Taking the tragic killing and death of many Iraqi children as evidence for the attempt to annihilate a people just as in the Holocaust is delusional and an example that those who make such equations are not interested in an analysis of reality, neither historically nor today.

Analogies Between the Holocaust and Persecution of Muslims

The argument that Muslims today suffer from prejudices similar to the prejudices that led to the persecution of Jews has been discussed widely (Benz 2010; Cesarani 2009). It has been claimed in public that Muslims are the Jews of today.¹⁸ However, only few interviewees directly compared the persecution of Jews to hostility against Muslims today, almost all of them from London. The argument implies an acknowledgement of the sufferings of Jews in the Holocaust but again, the Holocaust only stands as a metaphor for sufferings, abuse and the killing of many innocent people. Labaan summed it up:

A few hundred [years] back it was the Jewish people. Because they were treated very badly and given bad names and now it's our turn [...]. In a way it's the same level because every time, like, 9/11, there was many people killed, innocent people. But then again, how many innocent people have been killed in Iraq, Afghanistan, other places...

(Labaan from London)

Talking about possible reasons for the persecution of Jews, another interviewee said: "*I think everyone wants a scapegoat, for whatever problem. And now, Muslims have become the scapegoat*" (Manoj from London). The perception of antisemitism and the Holocaust as a result of scapegoating is widespread and enables equations to other prejudices. However, focussing on that aspect only, lacks a comprehensive

¹⁸ For the German context see Lau 2008. A prominent example in France is Eric Naulleau who made such claims on public TV France 2, 12 January 2010, see http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xcd8w8_les-musulmans-d-aujourd-hui-sont-co_news.

understanding of the Holocaust. It cannot explain why Jews were targeted and the scapegoat theory is questionable in general (Allport 1971).

Hussein, also from London, made the connection between persecution of Jews and Muslims today in an interesting way. Regarding the fact that Jews were forced into concentration camps he asked: “*And what was his [Hitler’s] reason? He was giving reasons such as they were terrorists?*” Hussein seems to think that the accusation of terrorism, which is often voiced against Muslims, could have been a pretext to kill the Jews and thereby compares both.

Explicitly Rejecting Antisemitic Equations

Some interviewees reject antisemitic equations between the Holocaust and the sufferings of Palestinians in the Middle East conflict. What are their reasons or rationales? Jamil from Berlin for example criticised Israel’s military action but distinguished between the Middle East conflict and the Holocaust, judging the latter as much worse and showed empathy for the victims of the Holocaust. He also did not show other forms of antisemitism. Farid from Paris rejected any equation referring to what he has learnt in school about the Holocaust. He did so despite biased views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict alluding to the image of all-powerful and cruel Jews. Others who rejected this equation did not refer to knowledge about the Holocaust but to their lack of knowledge and lack of emotional involvement. Tunay from Berlin of Turkish background for example rejects the equation and thinks that Jews and Arabs should fight their battle among themselves and Naresh from London believes that Jews and Muslims are equally responsible in the Middle East conflict.

The examples show three different rationales for rejecting antisemitic equations: Firstly, the lack of hostile feelings against Jews opens a non-biased view on the Holocaust and empathy for its victims. Secondly, educational approaches with the authority of teachers who stress the differences have been accepted despite biased attitudes against Jews. And thirdly, a lack of emotional involvement with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or critical views about Palestinians and thus no ambitions to portray a manichean picture of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The Holocaust and the Creation of the State of Israel

The perception that the Holocaust led to the creation of the State of Israel is widespread. It is often voiced together with a rejection of the legitimacy of the foundation of the State of Israel and fragments of an anti-colonialist discourse saying that the land of the State of Israel naturally belongs to another people and not to Jews. Tarak phrased this perception as “*Palestine, it belonged to the Muslims and then through the Holocaust they came through*” (Tarak from London). As he considers himself Muslim he presented the creation of the State of Israel as a process that took land away from his own community, despite his South-Asian backgrounds.

The emphasis on land that naturally belongs to a people has racist or xenophobic undertones. Suleiman for example said about the creation of the State of Israel: “*The Jews they just come to another land... the bastards*” (Suleiman from Berlin). And he is also generally opposed to immigration in general and wants Turkish people to leave Germany. For Palestinians he sees a special right to stay in Germany which he couples with the demand to get the Jews out of Palestine: “*The [Palestinians] have the right to live here as the Germans have sent the Jews to Palestine. I have [the] right to live here until they will get the Jews out of Palestine, until then I have the right to live here*” (Suleiman from Berlin). Jews are believed to belong to Europe or they are even denied the right of self-determination in their own country altogether:

As since back as Hitler. Jewish people they had no countries, they’s just spreaded all over the world. Why now you want to be re-united, and get Palestine as your own country? You can’t do that.

(Nader from London)

Nader thereby used the image of the wandering Jew who has no home country (Hasan-Rokem and Dundes 1986) and who should not have one. Another argument is that “the Muslims” or “the Palestinians” should not suffer from the Jews who were allegedly sent to Palestine. Labaan said “*I think the Jewish people should have had their place maybe in Germany or another place in Europe, because [...] the Muslims was not the people who was killing the Jewish*” (Labaan from London). The notion that Jews were sent to Palestine is a recurrent pattern and some make the Germans, others the British, the UN, the Americans or the Europeans responsible. Diaba from France explained with reference to his teacher:

Our teacher he told us that there was the Second World War or the First War. Then, the Europeans distributed the Jews, because the Jews were persecuted by the Germans, so that they put them in a land and the English they put the Muslims also in the same land as the Jews and therefore they fought to keep their country.

(Diaba from Paris)

Diaba’s account of the historical sources of the Middle East conflict is vague and reductive. However, he sees the persecution of the Jews by the Germans as the reason for the Europeans “to put the Jews” in the land of Palestine which, in his eyes, led to the Middle East conflict. Interestingly, he also said that the British sent Muslims to the same land, too, and thus portrayed both Jews and Muslims as passive and subjected to the colonial forces of the British Empire. It neglects the fact that Jews were struggling to get to Palestine under the British mandate and that the British government severely restricted Jewish immigration. In this view there is also no room to see the feuding Arab groups in Palestine with their different views on Jewish immigration at the time. Another aspect lies in the euphemism he used that that the Jews “*were persecuted*” in the Second World War. This is even more obvious in Naeem’s statement: “*Hitler expelled [the Jews] to Palestine. And the English gave [them] the country where the Palestinians are*” (Naeem from Berlin). But Jews were not only pursued and displaced but annihilated. Diminishing the Holocaust reduces potential sympathy and understanding for the establishment of the State of Israel.

German Guilt and Compensation Payments

Allegedly huge compensation payments by Germany to the state of Israel are a common topos of secondary antisemitism in Germany. It is often explained as a rejection of the feeling of collective guilt for the Holocaust committed by the generation of parents or grandparents (Rensmann 2005, 90–91; Gerlich 2001). It might therefore be surprising that this topos was also used by interviewees whose family background is non-German and who identify themselves hardly as German (Jikeli 2012b).

The two friends Ramzi and Ahmed were interviewed together in Berlin. Both do not consider themselves German (although Ahmed is German citizen)¹⁹ and both do not show any feeling of guilt for the Holocaust. However, already in the first 10 min of the interview, after a conversation about life in their district, difficulties of education and the economy in Germany, and without knowing that the interview was also going to be on attitudes towards Jews and the Holocaust, Ramzi complained about allegedly huge ongoing reparations from Germany to Israel.

Germany will go down [...]. It's getting worse and worse [...]. Berlin has a lot of debts. They were so stupid [...], they always think when it's too late [...]. Go and pay your debts first [...], so that you will be doing better instead of still paying every year 200 million Euro to Israel since the Second World War [...]. Every year, Germany pays 200 million to Israel. Why? [...] Because the Germans think that the Jews for example killed Hitler back then. And until now they are paying because they are so stupid [...]. And until now they think: "If there was Hitler now, that would be bad."

(Ra mzi from Berlin)

His statement shows that Ramzi does not consider himself German. He sees the compensation payments as a result of German stupidity, claiming that "the Germans" believe that Jews have liberated them from Hitler. His friend Ahmed did not agree on this bizarre allegation and corrected Ramzi with the words "*he meant that Germany feels guilty for Hitler*", pointing out the feeling of collective guilt in Germany. But Ahmed agrees in principal that alleged compensation payments are too high and he also complained that this money is lacking for, as he claimed, funding of education for youths like him: "*Who suffers from this? We young people who do not get a proper education.*"

Another interviewee from Germany, Sharif of Palestinian background, sees compensation payments as an outcome of a bad conscience of Germany and Europe, and added: "*You should not be called an antisemite, in no way. This is also a weapon that they definitely have*" (Sharif from Berlin). He thereby alluded to the image of the powerful Jews who use the accusation of antisemitism as a weapon²⁰ and also

¹⁹ Ramzi has a Palestinian background and Lebanese nationality, Ahmed is of Lebanese origin and a German citizen.

²⁰ This perception is generally widespread and was discussed extensively in Germany after Martin Walser said that the Holocaust is a moral club [Moralkeule] (Kovach and Walser 2008).

presented accusations of antisemitism as illegitimate, a typical pattern of denial of antisemitism (Hirsh 2010). Erol of Turkish background believes that Germany is afraid of criticising Israel because of “mistakes” in the past, as he labelled the Holocaust euphemistically. According to him, “criticism” of Israel is taboo and becomes immediately a scandal in Germany. And he referred to the scandal about the politician Jürgen Möllemann who, in fact, used antisemitic and anti-Israeli allusions in his campaign in 2002 while putting himself forward as taboo breaker (Benz 2004, 146–154). The details Erol provided about the scandal shows that he followed the public discourse attentively.

Why do young people with migrant backgrounds in Germany use patterns of secondary antisemitism, forms that suggest a rejection of a feeling of collective guilt for the Holocaust, a feeling they do not have? Interviewees have learnt these patterns from public and private discourses in Germany and use them as a form of accepted antisemitism.

Moral Judgements and Emotional Reactions to the Holocaust

One would expect disapproval, condemnation, outrage or sympathy with its victims as reactions to the Holocaust and the large majority indeed clearly disapprove of the atrocities of the Holocaust. But some participants are indifferent and a few in all three countries cite “other Arabs” or “other Muslims” satisfaction with it or approve themselves of the systematic mass murder of Jews. The Holocaust is strongly associated with Hitler who is usually seen and condemned as a racist and evil dictator, responsible for the Second World War and racist persecutions – “only” few show signs of sympathy for Hitler, most clearly five participants who declared that they like Hitler. However, neither the condemnation of Hitler nor knowledge about the Holocaust necessarily lead to a condemnation of the Holocaust. Equally, more detailed knowledge about the Holocaust does not lead to less antisemitic attitudes.²¹ In which ways and why do participants condemn the Holocaust?

Condemnations of the Holocaust

The Holocaust is denounced in general terms with attributes such as “horrible”, “sad”, “grave”, “bad”, “evil”. The Holocaust is also denounced in religious terms as a sin for killing “*too many people*” as Sakti from London said. Participants know that the Holocaust is condemned in society and usually accept the condemnation:

In school [...] and on TV you often see coverage [of the Holocaust] because the Germans often talk about it because that was one of their worst things of the past.

(Çeto from Berlin)

²¹ The latter confirms experiences of Holocaust Education in OSCE countries (OSCE/ODIHR 2006).

However, Çeto with Turkish-Kurdish background, who was born in Berlin and has German citizenship, sees the Holocaust as part of German history, not his own.²² Even though remembrance of the Holocaust is usually not given importance by interviewees no interviewee directly opposes the remembrance of the Holocaust.²³ One young man represented that attitude when he stated laconically: “*They’ve died, so obviously they should be remembered... to some extent*” (Rahim from London). The use of the Holocaust as a metaphor for atrocities as discussed above diminishes the Holocaust but also shows disapproval of the Holocaust. This notion is widespread not only among interviewees (Alexander 2009). Hitler, seen as the main perpetrator of the Holocaust, is usually denounced: “[*My friends*] *hate Hitler*” (Mehmet from Berlin), “*Hitler is my worst enemy!*” (Nadem from Paris), “*He was a maniac*” (Kashi from London) or simply, “*Hitler was a bad man,*” as one participant from Britain said, are frequent opinions on Hitler. The general assumption that Hitler was evil is not necessarily based on facts: some argued that he raped women – to stress his evilness. Additionally, particularly interviewees in Germany often perceive Neo-Nazis as a physical threat against themselves and some even had respective experiences. Others however see ideological similarities between them and Neo-Nazis regarding the dislike of Jews (see below).

Condemning the Holocaust with Restrictions: Accusations of Exploitation and Emotional Distance

A recurrent feeling coming with the acknowledgement of the suffering of Jews in the Holocaust is the notion that the Jews have earned, or merit, something with this suffering: “*They [the Jews] have earned certain things*” said Erol from Berlin. Another notion is that Jews are accused of being too sensitive because of the Holocaust and therefore often falsely accuse others of antisemitism.

I think Jews, after the Holocaust [...] would pick up on any tiny grievance, or any comment, and just straight away say: “Anti-Semitism”, straight away. Only because they’ve been vulnerable, innit? They’ve been hurt by that history [...] I think if you made any comment about Jews [...] as soon as you say it, they’d be: “Anti-Semitism”.

(Aba from London)

²² 40% of the population of Turkish background in Germany stated in 2010 that people of Turkish background should not be bothered to learn more about the persecution of Jews in Germany, 46% stated that they should (Die Zeit 2010).

²³ Some Muslim organisations oppose current forms of Holocaust remembrance. For example, the Muslim Council of Britain has repeatedly and explicitly boycotted the national Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration in the UK.

Hamza went even further and accused Jews of portraying themselves as victims and using the Holocaust for their purposes – a notion also common in general society²⁴: *“The pose as victims because of what happened then with Hitler and all that. They do it on purpose [...], they take advantage of it”* (Hamza from Paris).

Others showed indifference towards the victims of the Holocaust where one would expect empathy or a moral condemnation of the Holocaust but such statements are often inconclusive. Sharif for example did not use any negative terms in his description of the Holocaust and said:

It was one of the most important things in German history, or the most outstanding. I’ve always found that quite interesting, the issue itself. Not that I think that it’s a good thing or that I endorse it but I found it interesting.

(Sharif from Berlin)

He pointed out that he does not approve of the Holocaust but he did not denounce it either: he finds it “interesting”. He did not show empathy with the victims, just as Bahaar from London who described atrocities of the Holocaust and recalled that Jews were killed and burnt in such numbers that *“it looked like it was snowing.”*

Empathy

Compassion for the victims of the Holocaust is shown sporadically, also from those with very little knowledge about the Holocaust. Mehmet for example learned only during the interview that six million Jews were murdered but he was appalled and tried to imagine the number of six million murdered Jews. Jamil compared the atrocities of the Holocaust with the treatment of Palestinians by Israelis, judging the former as much worse. The way he described the “ghastly” atrocities done to Jews in the Holocaust shows compassion for the victims, even though historically, it is partly wrong.

What Hitler did with them back then that was much more horrible. He put them in the oven, he ripped off their skin and so on... Hitler was much worse, much much worse.

(Jamil from Berlin)

Those who showed empathy also showed no open antisemitic attitudes. A plausible explanation for this is that hatred against Jews today impede empathy with Jews who were murdered in the Holocaust.

²⁴ In a survey conducted in eight European countries in 2009 41,2% supposed that “Jews try to take advantage of having been victims during the Nazi era” (Zick et al. 2009, 2011).

Approval of the Holocaust and Common Ground with Nazis

The Holocaust is not condemned by all participants; some even show approval with the murder of Jews or declare their sympathy with Hitler such a participant from London of Bengali origin who said “*I like Hitler.*” Sympathy with Hitler or admiration for Hitler can be voiced bluntly as “*Hitler was a great guy [...]. He killed all the Jews*” (interviewee of a group interview in London), explicitly praising the killing of Jews. Such phrases may be partly provocations but they were often followed by matching statements. Let us consider the case of Hamza of Tunisian origin who said that he was just joking when he approved of the Holocaust. Here is what he said:

Hamza: *[In Auschwitz] they killed, they burnt, they gassed [...]. There were Jews, there were Gipsies, there were all those who were against Hitler [...] they should have continued.*

Interviewer: *Really ?*

Hamza: *No, I'm kidding.*

(Hamza from Paris)

Hamza thus withdrew his approval of the murder of Jews and others in Auschwitz after the interviewer inquired it. But as such provocations in general, they serve to make such statements speakable even if they are not accepted in public or private discourses. Other statements by Hamza show that he is indeed full of hatred against Jews. Hamza believes that Jews control everything in France, that “the Jews” kill Palestinian children and he approves of suicide bombers against Israelis and Americans. Adding to that he said that he was involved in a fight against “the Jews”. Thus he may well approve of the Holocaust, even though he does not want to fully acknowledge it to the interviewer.

Kassim, another interviewee from Berlin, dislikes Hitler but nevertheless praises him for killing the Jews: “*He is not a good man, Hitler – but he did well that he killed the Jews*” (Kassim from Berlin). Some showed ambivalent feelings towards Hitler and the Holocaust such as admiration for Hitler’s power, his smartness and “*fitness programs*” on the one hand and condemnation that he “*killed too many people*” on the other hand (both views from different interviewees of a group interview in London). Blatant and adamant approval of the Holocaust was one of the most shocking forms of antisemitism and most clearly and insistently voiced by Suleiman from Berlin of Palestinian background and Moukhtar from Paris of Maghrebian background. Consider Suleiman’s statement below.

Suleiman: *What should I say about Hitler? [...] Then, I think, he wanted to become an artist, but there he wasn't accepted and that we, I think, Jews. Thus his hatred of them grew more and more – he held always speeches. Then [...], at some point, he founded a party with the Nazis so that they became then more and more. In the Bundestag [parliament] they had started to suppress Jews, to beat them in the streets and then at some point they were more than the majority [and they] convinced the Reichspräsident that he appointed him chancellor and then it really started with the extermination of Jews, concentration camps and everything. That was a good man, Hitler.*

Interviewer: *You think it is good what he did, Hitler?*

Suleiman: *Of course.*

Interviewer: *Why do you think that's good?*

Suleiman: *Well, this race, he almost extinguished them [...]. I think it's good that he killed them. Just those who were left over, these pigs, they came to us [...]. I hate Jews. Like Hitler hated them, I hate them, too.*

(Suleiman from Berlin)

Suleiman left no doubts about his endorsement of the Holocaust in full conscience of the extermination of Jews. Consequently, he praised Hitler as a good person. Suleiman hates Jews as he declared repeatedly. Despite the fact that he was born in Germany, has German citizenship and both his parents came to Germany more than 25 years ago, he strongly feels Palestinian. That is why he refers to the migration of Holocaust survivors to Palestine as „those who were left over, the pigs, they came to us.“ His hatred against Jews and Holocaust survivors is clearly not limited to Israelis. In the interview he disdained and abused even a German Holocaust survivor in his eighties who had visited his school to talk about his experiences during the Holocaust. Consider his accounts of the encounter with the Holocaust survivor in his school:

I met Jews and that didn't go well. Here, in school, there was a Jew. After that he really looked differently, because we through him out from school [LAUGHS] [...]. He came in, was spat at by the Arab students, beaten, and then he ran away quickly [...]. What did he do at our school? He thus provokes on purpose that there are many Palestinians. He comes in like a Jew, like a son-of-a-bitch. So agree with them, fucking-Jew.

(Suleiman from Berlin)

His friend, Ismail, also of Palestinian origin, reported the same incident. Even though he did not insult the Holocaust survivor during the interview, he said, *“I stand with those who were against him and I just didn't think about it”* (Ismail from Berlin). He showed no signs of regret for the incident but Ismail was one of the few students who met again with the Holocaust survivor in a small group. Thereupon he declared: *“In the end I felt sorry for him because in the end he was crying, because he had a little case with him. There was photo on it, he was 13 years old then. He said that basically it's not his fault that he is a Jew and he is a proud Jew”* (Ismail from Berlin). Unfortunately, the intervention of the Holocaust survivor did not lead to a fundamental change of Ismail's Jew-hatred. He bluntly stated elsewhere on several occasions that he hates Jews. Mousa, German of Palestinian origin, denounced Hitler because of his responsibility for the Second World War and the many death but he thinks that six million Jews are too few compared to the number of those killed in that war and declared that he wished that more Jews had died. It is therefore not a general indifference towards people who got killed in the past but specifically Jews whose killings not only lack empathy but can even be endorsed.

Endorsing the Holocaust is far from being a phenomenon only among those of Palestinian background even though the most blatant examples in this study come from that group. However, others who do not identify themselves as Palestinian also endorse the Holocaust such as Moukhtar from Paris of Moroccan origin who openly hates Jews and applauded the Holocaust. And Assim, a Frenchman of Algerian origin, said upon the fact that 6 million Jews were killed: *“to be honest, I was really in favour of Hitler. Here we go, all-out for Hitler”* (Assim from Paris). He revoked

this statement only reluctantly afterwards, disapproving of the gas chambers, and concluded that it is “a bit hard, it’s complicated”. Consider his conclusion in his own words:

No, it wasn’t good what they did, the gas chambers and all that [...] that wasn’t good, all right, but [...] I don’t know how to explain that to you, really, it’s a bit hard, it’s complicated.

(Assim from Paris)

Bilal, who is also French with Algerian background, agrees with his friend that it was better when Hitler was around after he accused “the Jews” of killing children in the war against Hezbollah, which he said, creates hatred against them. It is thus another example that hatred against Jews influences the perception of the Holocaust and can even lead to approval of the Holocaust. Azhar and Hafid from Paris of Maghrebian origin directly explained the approval of Arabs in that way and distanced themselves only reluctantly from this rationale. “*I’m somewhat happy about it, but you shouldn’t do it*” (Azhar from Paris), said Azhar, knowing that it is morally wrong to be happy about the Holocaust. Bashkar from London of South-Asian origin knows people who endorse the Holocaust whom he labels as “some Muslims”. He distanced himself somewhat stronger than Azhar and Hafid from that position but he did not oppose it directly. Consider his words.

I know some people, who told us, some Muslims, they told me Hitler was good, that he killed all the Jewish. “He should kill not 6 million, he should kill 30 million”, that’s what they said. But I said, “I don’t know, that’s past, history.”

(Bashkar from London)

Besides the rationale that hostility against Jews leads to approval of the Holocaust there were also justifications of the Holocaust in line with propaganda of National Socialism. Ramzi who was born in Germany but has Lebanese citizenship justified the “attack against the Jews” as he described the Holocaust as an act of self-defence. He believes that the Jews wanted to take over the country. Some participants are not adverse to Nazis. Haroun from Paris of Maghrebian origin for example admires a neighbour who he claimed was an old general of Nazi-Germany and said that he was “like a grandfather” for him. Ismail, German of Palestinian origin, is proud to have excerpts on his mobile phone of Goebbels’s infamous propaganda speech in front of a large audience in the Sportpalast on 18 February 1943, including the question “do you want the total war?” (which was enthusiastically approved by supporters at the time and which is part of the recording). Kassim has a friend of German origin who considers himself Neonazi and Naeem declared to be a “Palestinian Nazi” himself. Common ideological grounds were made explicit and were seen above all in the common Jew-hatred but also in “family values”.²⁵ Naeem, for example, who considers himself Palestinian despite his German citizenship, stated that if he met Neo-Nazis he would simply say “Palestine”. Bashir, German of Lebanese background, uttered the greeting of the National Socialists “Sieg Heil” during the interview.

²⁵Imran and Manoj from London with South Asian backgrounds for example praised family values of the Nazis. They both show antisemitic attitudes elsewhere and Manoj has serious doubts about the Holocaust as a historical fact.

He is torn between approval and disapproval of Hitler: “*He is one of us. Je killed the Je – no, he is not one of us, he is a son-of-a-bitch*” (Bashir from Berlin). His attempt to count Hitler as “one of us” is a hint to his manichean views in which the Jews configure on the evil side. This dual worldview makes it therefore difficult for him to condemn Hitler. But again, awareness of commonalities with Nazis is not confined to those with Palestinian or Lebanese backgrounds. Tunay, German of Turkish background, recalled an incident during a manifestation when he was praised by a Neo-Nazi for his anti-Jewish attitudes that he voiced:

Tunay: *The Nazi, [...] “Yes“, he told me, “you have a good attitude, I like you“. [...] There were Nazis next to mee and than such a Jew there, a bit further. And I said, “look at this fucking Jew“ [...]. [Then] I gossiped about Jews. He was happy, the Nazi.*

Interviewer: *Didn't you think that's strange, that you say something that the Nazi likes, too?*

Tunay: *Yes, of course. I found it funny that he thought it's cool. It was OK.*

(Tunay from Berlin)

Not only that Tunay noticed the common hostility of Jews between him and Neo-Nazis but he seems to be happy with it. Moukhtar from Paris of Maghrebian origin who openly hates Jews said the following about Neo-Nazis: “*They don't like the Jews [...]. Still until today, they don't like them. This is that they are a little bit like us*” (Moukhtar from Paris). Moukhtar thus sees parallels between Neo-Nazis and “us”. Who does he mean with “us”?

The examples show that some see common ideological grounds between Nazis or Hitler and Muslims, based on Jew-hatred. Others had made the observation that both Nazis and Muslims hate Jews. But instead of questioning the Jew-hatred, Rajsekar of Asian background for example wondered what was wrong with the Jews. Beyar of Turkish-Kurdish origin wondered why Hitler did not like Jews, even though Hitler was not Muslim.

Conclusions

Perceptions of the Holocaust and its moral judgement are swayed by views of Jews. However, interviewees have only limited knowledge about the Holocaust even though they are generally interested in the history of the Holocaust. The basic knowledge of almost all participants include that the National Socialists in Germany murdered the European Jews and held Jews in concentration camps. The most important source for this and further knowledge is school, even though, in some cases interviewees referred to their school as a source of distorted or simplistic views of the Holocaust. Some discourses oppose the public discourse of the Holocaust by denial or approval of the Holocaust. This is often informed by rumours in the community or a discourse from “back home”.

Research on social identity has shown that identification as a group member leads to adoption of (alleged) shared beliefs.²⁶ If young Muslims think that hostile

²⁶ (Hale 2004, 470); see also Abrams and Hogg (1999).

attitudes towards Jews are common in their community, then they might adopt such attitudes that also influence their views on the Holocaust even if that contradicts knowledge they have learnt in school. Additionally, some doubt the Holocaust with reference to national TV or books. In any case, Holocaust denial or even approval is not rooted in a lack of knowledge but the result of the choice to believe a respective discourse in opposition to the official discourse. To bridge this gap between the public discourse and their narrative interviewees believe the public discourse to be biased or staged.

Comparing the Holocaust to other incidents or tragedies in ways which diminish the Holocaust is widespread in European societies and among interviewees. The Holocaust is used as a reference for evil or for sufferings of innocents in general, becoming an empty metaphor that has lost the notion of the systematic murder of European Jewry. The Holocaust is often equated with the sufferings of Palestinians but often also to other events such the war in Iraq. A recurrent topos is the killing of children as a symbol of innocence. The former equations imply the perception of deep sufferings of the Palestinians in the hands of the Israelis or “the Jews” who are accused of evil intentions. Such equations often come with antisemitic stereotypes and tropes such as Jews as child murderers, the image of the wandering Jew, allegations of a “Jewish revenge” for the Holocaust and antisemitic conspiracy theories. Those equations are rather rooted in hostile attitudes towards Jews and the emotional attachment to the struggle of Palestinians against Israel than in a lack of knowledge about the Holocaust. Hostile attitudes towards Jews are a motive to diminish the Holocaust. The emotional attachment to “the Palestinians” is a motive to exaggerate sufferings of “the Palestinians” and to see them as a unitary category and as victims only. Together, it facilitates an equation of the Holocaust and sufferings of Palestinians in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Only few interviewees directly compared the persecution of Jews to hostility against Muslims today, but almost all of those who did live in London and reduce the Holocaust to the result of scapegoating. Some delusional equations, such as using the killing and death of many Iraqi children as evidence for the attempt to annihilate a people and likening this to the Holocaust, confirm that those who make such equations are not interested in an analysis of reality. Their opinion is preconceived and they adhere to a manichean worldview.

The notion that the Holocaust led to the creation of the State of Israel is also a recurrent pattern of argumentation. It is often voiced together with a rejection of the legitimacy of the foundation of the State of Israel and fragments of an anti-colonialist discourse saying that the land of the State of Israel naturally belongs to another people and not to Jews. The anti-colonialist discourse often finds its expression in the topos that “the Jews” were allegedly sent to Palestine. Interviewees use antisemitic tropes such the wandering Jew to present the creation of Israel as illegitimate. The Holocaust is diminished to reduce potential sympathy and understanding for the establishment of the State of Israel.

Interviewees judge the Holocaust differently. One would expect disapproval, condemnation, outrage and sympathy with its victims as reactions to the Holocaust and the large majority indeed disapprove of the atrocities of the Holocaust. But some

participants are indifferent and a few in all three countries cite “other Muslims” or “other Arabs” satisfaction with it or they themselves approve of the systematic mass murder of Jews. The blatant approval of the Holocaust is made in consciousness of the systematic mass murder of European Jewry. It is the result of open Jew-hatred and not the result of a lack of knowledge. Approval of the Holocaust is often associated with a positive view of National Socialists which some participants express despite the fact that Neo-Nazis also target their own community. This contradiction is manifested in views on Hitler. The Holocaust is strongly associated with Hitler who is usually seen and condemned as a racist and evil dictator, responsible for the Second World War and racist persecutions. Therefore, those who approve of the Holocaust do not necessarily admire Hitler. Nevertheless, some showed signs of sympathy for Hitler because of his Jew-hatred, most clearly five participants who explicitly declared that they like Hitler. To resume, neither the condemnation of Hitler nor knowledge about the Holocaust necessarily lead to the condemnation of the Holocaust (or to less antisemitic attitudes).

A number of misconceptions of the Holocaust among young European Muslims are also widespread in the general respective European societies: Hitler is frequently portrayed as the only responsible person for the persecution of Jews and “the Jews” are seen as a unitary category mingling together victims of the Holocaust and Israelis today. Interviewees also use common antisemitic tropes such as the accusation that Jews use the Holocaust for their purposes and that Jews talk too much about the Holocaust. However, in contrast to some political Muslim organisations, no interviewee directly opposes the remembrance of the Holocaust.

Participants from Germany give interesting examples of influence of the national discourse: some interviewees who do not identify themselves as German use patterns of secondary antisemitism – usually seen as a form of rejection of the feeling of collective guilt for the Holocaust which they do not have. It can be assumed that interviewees have learnt these patterns from public and private discourses in Germany and use them as a form of accepted antisemitism.

Thus, misconceptions and biased views on the Holocaust can be informed by discourses in the respective European society and by discourses in the religious or ethnic community (and countries of origin). The latter can have a dominant impact if the collective identification with the community is predominant.

However, misconceptions of the Holocaust are often related to a lack of understanding of history in general. Many do not understand history as an open process involving the struggle of diverse actors. Just as they understand themselves as objects of society rather than subjects they see history as the outcome of decisions taken by a few people from the ruling class on which they have no influence.

Two rationales can be distinguished for rejecting antisemitic views of the Holocaust and equations of the Holocaust with other sufferings resulting in diminishing the Holocaust: First, the lack of hostile feelings against Jews enables a non-biased view of the Holocaust and empathy for its victims. Second, educational approaches pointing out for example the differences between the Holocaust and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be accepted with the authority of teachers or others despite biased attitudes against Jews.

References

- Abrams, Dominic, and Michael A. Hogg (eds.). 1999. *Social identity and social cognition*. Malden: Massachusetts.
- Alexander, Jeffrey. 2009. *Remembering the Holocaust: A debate*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press.
- Allport, Gordon W. 1971. *Die Natur des Vorurteils*. Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch.
- Bali, Rifat N. 2009. Present-day anti-semitism in Turkey. *Post-Holocaust and anti-semitism*, Institute for Global Jewish Affairs, No. 84, August 16.
- Benz, Wolfgang. 2004. *Was ist antisemitismus?* Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung.
- Benz, Wolfgang. 2010. Antisemiten und Islamfeinde - Hetzer mit Parallelen. *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, January 4. <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/837/499119/text/>.
- Bergmann, Werner. 1997. *Antisemitismus in Öffentlichen Konflikten: Kollektives Lernen in Der Politischen Kultur Der Bundesrepublik 1949–1989*. Frankfurt am Main/New York: Campus.
- Bertelsmann Stiftung. 2007. *Deutsche und Juden – verbindende Vergangenheit, trennende Gegenwart?* Gütersloh/Berlin. http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/bst/de/media/xcms_bst_dms_20241_20275_2.pdf.
- Brenner, Emmanuel. 2004. *Les territoires perdus de la République: Antisémitisme, racisme et sexisme en milieu scolaire*. Paris: Mille et une nuits.
- Brettfeld, Katrin, and Peter Wetzels. 2007. *Muslims in Deutschland*. Berlin: Bundesministerium des Inneren.
- Cesarani, David. 2009. Why Muslims are not the new Jews. *The Jewish Chronicle Online*. <http://www.thejc.com/comment/comment/21173/why-muslims-are-not-new-jews>.
- Cüppers, Martin, and Klaus-Michael Mallmann. 2006. *Halbmond und Hakenkreuz*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.
- Die Zeit. 2010. Deutschtürken und der Holocaust: Geteilte Erinnerung, January 21. <http://www.zeit.de/2010/04/Editorial-Umfrage>.
- Elchardus, Mark. 2011. Antisemitisme in de Brusselse scholen. In *Jong in Brussel. Bevindingen uit de Jop-monitor Brussel*, ed. Nicole Vettenburg, Mark Elchardus, and Johan Put, 265–296. Leuven: Acco.
- EUMC/FRA. 2005. Working definition of antisemitism. <http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/material/pub/AS/AS-WorkingDefinition-draft.pdf>.
- Frindte, Wolfgang, Klaus Boehnke, Henry Kreikenbom, and Wolfgang Wagner. 2012. *Lebenswelten junger Muslime in Deutschland*, commissioned by the Ministry of the Interior.
- Gerlich, Horst Peter. 2001. Sekundärer Antisemitismus in Deutschland Nach 1989. <http://www.fasena.de/download/forschung/Gerlich.pdf>.
- GfK NOP. 2006. Attitudes to living in Britain – A survey of Muslim opinion. <http://www.slide-share.net/brighteyes/attitudes-to-living-in-britain>.
- Gribetz, Judah. 1994. *The timetables of Jewish history: A chronology of the most important people and Events in Jewish history*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Hale, Henry E. 2004. Explaining ethnicity. *Comparative Political Studies* 37(4): 458–485.
- Hasan-Rokem, Galit, and Alan Dundes. 1986. *The wandering Jew: Essays in the interpretation of a Christian legend*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Heitmeyer, Wilhelm. 2005. *Deutsche Zustände. Folge 3*, 2nd ed. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Hirsh, David. 2010. Accusations of Malicious Intent in Debates About the Palestine-Israel Conflict and About Antisemitism. The Livingstone Formulation, 'playing the Antisemitism Card' and Contesting the Boundaries of Antiracist Discourse. *Transversal - Zeitschrift Für Jüdische Studien* 1: 47–77.
- Jikeli, Günther. 2012a. *Antisemitismus und Diskriminierungswahrnehmungen junger Muslime in Europa*. Essen: Klartext.
- Jikeli, Günther. 2012b. Discrimination of European Muslims: Self-Perceptions, experiences and discourses of victimhood. In *Minority groups: Coercion, discrimination, exclusion, deviance and the quest for equality*, ed. D. Soen, M. Shechory, and S.B. David, 77–96. Hauppauge: Nova Science Pub Inc.

- Kershaw, Ian. 1999. *Hitler: 1889–1936 Hubris*. New York: Norton.
- Klug, Brian. 2004. The myth of the new anti-semitism. *The Nation*, February 2. <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20040202/klug/5>.
- Knopp, Guido. 2004. *Hitler's Holocaust*. Stroud: Sutton Pub.
- Kovach, Thomas A., and Martin Walser. 2008. *The burden of the past: Martin Walser on modern German identity: Texts, contexts commentary*. New York: Rochester.
- Kreuzberger Initiative gegen Antisemitismus. 2004. *Sonderbeilage zu Vakit*. <http://www.kiga-berlin.org/uploads/Material/Kiga%20Sonderbeilage%20Vakit.pdf>.
- Lanzmann, Claude. 1994. Holocauste, la représentation impossible. *Le Monde*, March 3.
- Lau, Jörg. 2008. Zu Faruk Sens Vergleich der Türken mit den Juden im Dritten Reich. *Zeit Online*, June 30.
- Lipstadt, Deborah. 1993. *Denying the Holocaust: The growing assault on truth and memory*. New York: Plume.
- Litvak, Meir, and Esther Webman. 2009. *From empathy to denial: Arab responses to the Holocaust*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Maddy-Weitzman, Bruce. 2010. Sounds from North Africa. *The Jerusalem Report*, January 18.
- Mohammed VI, Roi du Maroc. 2009. Official message to Aladdin Projet". March 18. http://www.fondationshoah.info/FMS/IMG/pdf/Message_-_Roi_Maroc_fr.pdf.
- Nordbruch, Götz. 2009. *Nazism in Syria and Lebanon: The ambivalence of the German option, 1933–1945*. London/New York: Routledge.
- OSCE/ODIHR. 2006. *Education on the Holocaust and on anti-semitism: An overview and analysis of educational approaches*. Warsaw: OSCE/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.
- Projet Aladin. 2010. *Projet Aladin*. <http://www.projetaladin.org/>.
- Rensmann, Lars. 2005. *Demokratie und Judenbild. Antisemitismus in der politischen Kultur der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Salzborn, Samuel. 2010. *Antisemitismus als negative Leitidee der Moderne: Sozialwissenschaftliche Theorien Im Vergleich*. Campus: Frankfurt/New York.
- Satloff, Robert. 2006. *Among the righteous: Lost stories from the Holocaust's long reach into Arab lands*. New York: Public Affairs.
- Silverstein, Paul A. 2008. The context of antisemitism and islamophobia in France. *Patterns of Prejudice* 42(1): 1.
- The Living History Forum. 2004. *Anti-Semitic, Homophobic, Islamophobic and Xenophobic tendencies among the young*. Stockholm: Brottsförebyggande radet (BRÅ) [National Council for Crime Prevention].
- The Pew Global Attitudes Project. 2006. *The great divide. How Westerners and Muslims view each other*: <http://pewglobal.org/reports/pdf/253.pdf>.
- Walter, Jacques. 1998. La liste de Schindler au miroir de la presse. *Mots* 56(1): 69–89.
- Zick, Andreas, Beate Küpper, and Hinna Wolf. 2009. *European conditions. Findings of a study on group-focused enmity in Europe*. Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence, University of Bielefeld. http://www.amadeu-antonio-stiftung.de/w/files/pdfs/gfe-pressrelease_english.pdf.
- Zick, Andreas, Beate Küpper, and Andreas Hövermann. 2011. *Intolerance, prejudice and discrimination a European report*. Berlin: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Forum Berlin. <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/do/07908-20110311.pdf>.

History and Memory of the Other: An Experimental Encounter-Programme with Israeli Jews and Palestinians from Israel¹

Monique Eckmann

Context and Theoretical Background of the Project

The Role of Memory in the Context of “Intractable Conflicts”

Every encounter relating to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is characterised by the phenomenon of “competing memories,” in which one side evokes the memory of the Holocaust, the Destruction of the European Jews and the fear of history being repeated, while the other strives for recognition of the Nakba, the memory of the destruction of Palestinian society. The issue dealt with in this article is the crucial role played by collective memory in intergroup conflicts, and in conflict transformation. This role is widely recognised in education and research on peace dynamics (Galtung 1998; Bar-On 2001), especially when facing “*intractable*” conflicts (Bar-Tal 2002, 2007). The latter are defined as violent, last over a long time (over a generation), are characterised by a strong polarisation between *us* and *them*, mobilise the resources of the whole society and in which the involved actors see no hope for a solution. In these conflicts, the memory of atrocities endured in the past is transmitted from generation to generation as proof of the ongoing victimisation of the group.

¹The programme was carried out by the Van Leer Institute, Jerusalem; it had been granted financial support by the Heinrich Böll Foundation and the Fondation pour la mémoire de la Shoah. The research was financed by CEDIC (Center for Cultural Diversity and Citizenship), University of Applied Sciences of Western Switzerland (HES-SO). A shorter version of this paper was published in French in Haddad et al. (2009, 171–195); a longer version will be published in Hebrew and Arabic by the Van Leer Institute.

M. Eckmann (✉)
e-mail: monique.eckmann@hesge.ch

Furthermore, this stand is supposed to demonstrate the moral ascendancy of the group over “the others” in relation not only to the final objective but also to the means deployed in the conflict (Bar-Tal 2007).

Recognition of the Other’s history and memory is, in peace work, an integral part of the non-violent approach. Remembering the dead is essential to preserving dignity; conversely, forgetting a person’s name is equivalent to destroying him symbolically. Margalit underlines in *The Ethics of Memory* (Margalit 2002) the importance of remembering the name of the deceased, an ethical duty for close relatives and a moral one for more distant persons. Nations, ethnic or religious groups can form *communities of memory*; sharing memory of often painful events that have affected their members, in order to accept and overcome their grief and trauma, strengthening and creating bonds of solidarity and ensuring the continuity of the group.

However, memories of the same historical event are not homogeneous; they form different, even contradictory perspectives. The victories of one side are the defeats of the other; the independence of one side represents a tragedy for the other. Margalit differentiates between common and shared memories (ibid): Common memory is the sum of individual memories of the same event. Shared memory includes *several different perspectives of the same event*, which, in order to be known and mutually accepted, have to be told, heard and shared. Thus, shared memories require communication between different communities of memory about their respective narratives. Even if they don’t agree, they can at least register and acknowledge their diversity and discuss it. Acknowledgement of the Other’s memory is a basis for any dialogue between conflicting groups.

This is also emphasised by authors dealing with Peace education, especially in the context of intractable conflicts. According to Gavriel Salomon, Peace education aims at a change in the perception of the Other’s collective narrative, and includes four dimensions (Salomon 2002: 9):

1. Legitimation of *Their* Collective Narrative
2. Critical examination of *Our Contribution* to the Conflict
3. Empathy for *Their* suffering
4. Engagement in Nonviolent Activities

Thus, recognition of the Other’s narrative constitutes a crucial element in changing representations and contributes to lowering the levels of hostility and violence. To be clear, it is not a question of adopting the Other’s narrative, but rather of acknowledging the Other’s narrative as a legitimate position not to be rejected solely on the basis of it being the Other’s narrative. As Axel Honneth claims, social struggle is not only a fight for rights or the sharing of resources, but is mainly a struggle for social recognition (Honneth 1995).

The aim of this project is to further knowledge about the Holocaust, as well as understanding and recognition of the history and memory of both nations. It should create conditions conducive to reciprocal listening and consideration, without giving way to simplistic analogies between events to which the two cultures of memory refer. Rather than aiming at a common memory, the purpose is to acknowledge divided memories and create a space for sharing them.

The Current Discursive Context of Divided Memory

Israel and Palestine are scenes of an “intractable” conflict, where any reflection on the conflict or on the Holocaust requires first and foremost considering victimhood on both sides. A controversy hints to the comparative importance of the victims of the Holocaust, with either putting into perspective or accepting the absolute nature of the genocide, in which the Jews appear to their own eyes and like a mirror in symmetry to the eyes of their interlocutors, as the “eternal and ultimate victims.” Thus, the Holocaust represents an extremely sensitive topic in any encounter programme, often considered as a taboo subject better avoided, and as one that can be neither analysed nor discussed because of the emotions it stirs up on both sides.

Such sensitivity is comprehensible on the Jewish-Israeli side, where the effect of the historical experience and of the trauma endures and is far from disappearing even 65 years after the fact, and where the transmission of the trauma from one generation to the next goes on. The discourse on the Holocaust is ever-present: every act of violence, every bomb attack brings back the memory of the catastrophe and fear of annihilation resurfaces.

This is compounded by the fact that in the prevailing memory of Israeli society, as well as in its political discourse, the victims of the Holocaust have a key position and a central role in the building of the nation (Zertal 2004). In addition, there is a lingering fear, real or imagined, of a ‘return to Auschwitz’ as a reference “*constantly put forward in the face of a world seen as hostile and anti-Semitic*” (ibid: 9–10). But this does not necessarily mean that the Israeli public actually has always a precise historical knowledge of either the Holocaust or of National Socialism.

On the Palestinian side, people generally see themselves as “victims of the victims”; they feel that they are being made to pay unfairly for a crime that was committed in Europe and in which they had no part. In some sectors of Arab society the notion exists that the Holocaust is a myth, that it never happened, and that it is a fabrication of the Zionist establishment to legitimise the foundation of the State of Israel. Thus, querying the Holocaust is a way of negating the legitimacy of the State, which the detractors of the Palestinians see as denoting a murderous, even genocidal conation.

A large part of the Arab population is indifferent to the subject of the Holocaust, or, if it does acknowledge it, relativises the scale and horror of it, or even minimises it. But a growing number of voices, such as Edward Said for example, are calling for Palestinians and Arabs in general to study what happened during National-Socialism and the Holocaust, and affirming that everyone should learn about it.

In schools, the learning and socialisation process is very dissimilar. The Israeli school system is divided into several sub-systems based on language (Arabic or Hebrew) or on the level of orthodoxy (secular, orthodox). Programmes are different even if the formal standard is the same. In the schools of the Hebrew/Jewish sector, students of age 16–17 are strongly encouraged to take part in a field trip to Poland, to learn about the Holocaust. The schools of the Arab sector do not undertake such trips. In both sectors the Holocaust is a baccalaureate subject, but its’ teaching is

uneven depending on the sector; furthermore, the orthodox Jewish schools do not send their students to Poland.

In the wider society, for years one could witness an escalation of comparisons and a certain mimicry between the two groups, each referring to the past as a way of delegitimising the other. Countless inappropriate analogies have been made, such as equating the Holocaust with the Nakba, the refugee camps with concentration camps, the Israeli occupation with the Nazi occupation, etc. Both sides resort to the casual use of comparative terminology, and Sharon, Saddam Hussein, Ahmadinejad and Arafat have all been branded as new Hitlers.

On both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the concrete and very real historical experience of being a victim has been transformed into a durable identification with victimhood. Thus, every event can be explained from the angle of victimhood, thereby discharging the actors of their responsibility for their deeds. This claim to victimhood can be put into the wider context of “competition among victims”, which, according to Jean-Michel Chaumont (Chaumont 1997) is a consequence of an absence of acknowledgement of the Holocaust experience after the war and that it is motivated by a quest for recognition. In the last 20 or 30 years the status of the victim has been transformed and the values of moral merit have been reversed. Chaumont shows how the hero figure has undergone deep transformation: whereas in the past heroes were heroised, nowadays it is the victims that are heroised. Thus the valuation of what people have actually achieved is replaced by the valuation of what they have suffered, a reversal that has a great impact on the status of victims and the claim to material and symbolic recognition. Indeed, we believe that it is crucial to acknowledge the victims as such, but in terms of *situation and of experience*, rather than in terms of *identity* (Eckmann 2004).

The tendency to politicise, ethnicise and exploit the discourse surrounding the Holocaust shows that it is employed more as a platform for projection and argumentation than as an historical reference. People on both sides realise that such politicisation is not supported by historical knowledge and some call for a serious study of the historical facts. This encounter project aims to study history and compare the myths, taboos, projections and traumas of the past with their prolongation into the present, without ignoring the emotional impact of this project.

Starting Points and Concepts of the Programme

It all started with a programme of encounters between Israeli Jews and Israeli Palestinians, which dealt in depth with the current conflict situation, the history of the conflict, as well as with the Nakba. The process was particularly well thought out and planned over a longer period than most similar endeavours; and addressed the feelings and aspirations of the participants on both sides. After comparing the diverging narratives about the conflict and having taken stock of the realities on both sides, it seemed that the exercise made the participants feel that they had been heard

and that both their fears and their aspirations in relation to the conflict had been understood. This led some Palestinian participants to reflect that “*It is time for us to deal with the Holocaust.*” The team decided to build an encounter programme which would include learning about the history and the memory of the Holocaust.

The project was built in partnerships with the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem,² and is an initiative for Israeli Jews and Palestinians of Israel to study together the Holocaust and explore how it is related to the traumas of both nations. The model is based on the combination of encounter-process and Holocaust education.

This project can be seen within the context of encounter programmes, which generally allot considerable space to the conflict, and sometimes to the Nakba, while the Holocaust either is considered taboo, too emotional or is exploited in a controversial manner. This programme is intended as a counterpoint to this and aims to build a new relationship between the two tragic historical events. The main goals can be summed up as follows:

- To take into account the memory and history of both societies – Jewish/Israeli and Palestinian – and promote mutual recognition of the traumas experienced, be it in regard to the conflict, the Nakba or the Holocaust.
- To overcome the tabooisation and politicisation of the Holocaust and turn this topic into one that can be dealt with and discussed in encounter programmes.
- To enlarge the vision of the Holocaust and – by granting the victims and their memory due respect and honour – deal with the mechanisms that brought about national socialist power and genocidal politics.
- To create an experimental educational process that deals with the past as well as the present and that promotes cognitive understanding while dealing with emotions, fears and difficulties; thus exploring an alternative model of dialogue about the Holocaust in Israel that can be used for teaching or community work – taking into account the different ways in which the two societies are connected to this event.
- To explore the possibilities for the Arab-Palestinian minority to take an active part in the discourse about the Holocaust, be it in the public sphere or at the level of the school system.

Thus, it is not a programme which unilaterally aims to arouse empathy for the victims of the Holocaust, but rather it is an attempt to discover, *together*, what can be learnt about the mechanisms of the rise and evolution of a totalitarian regime. In order to do this, a great deal of space must be given to the contributions of historians, but also to the fears, traumas, frustrations and the often violent feelings of participants linked to the current conflict. This demands the creation of a training process that combines cognitive learning, encounters and dialogue, and also allows time for participants to express their feelings and doubts.

² The staff was composed by Haifa Sabagh, Director of the programme; Michal Lewin and Saed Tali, facilitators; Amos Goldberg and Monique Eckmann, experts. The programme in Berlin was designed together with Wolf Kaiser of the House of the Wannsee Conference.

The Model: At a Crossroads of Two Socio-Pedagogical Approaches

For these reasons, the programme is located at the intersection of two socio-pedagogical traditions: *encounter-process* between groups in conflict, coming of the field of peace-education or conflict transformation; and *Holocaust education*, related to didactics of history. Here are the main parameters of both approaches:

- (a) The principle of peace education is based on a bi-national setting and the principle of alternating common bi-national and separate uni-national meetings. This includes as well the rule of joint facilitation by facilitators from both groups; and attentiveness to the asymmetrical nature of power relations (Maoz 2000, 2002; Halabi and Philipps-Heck 2001). *Bi-national facilitation* means joint facilitation by two persons, each identifying with one of the parties, and carried out consistently throughout the process (Bar and Bargal 1995; Maoz 2002). It requires systematic, carefully prepared alternation between uni-national sessions separately led by each facilitator with his/her group, and bi-national sessions led jointly, bringing both groups together. The two types of sessions have distinct purposes: the bi-national sessions are an opportunity to bring up and formulate *intergroup* conflicts, whereas uni-national sessions are the place for *intragroup* conflicts. The dialectical interplay between intergroup and intragroup conflicts is the veritable motor of the process. While intergroup sessions raise tensions between the groups, it is during *intragroup* conflicts that participants are forced to develop a reflexive attitude regarding the conflicts within their own group. Even if the power asymmetry can never be entirely erased, equality is established insofar as possible within the microcosm of the encounters, which encourages discussion about the conflicts and fosters trust.
- (b) As for Holocaust education, several dimensions are to be considered: knowledge of the historical facts concerning Nazism and the Holocaust as well as of the historians' interpretations and debates; preservation of the memory of those who were murdered, and reflection on the "moral and spiritual questions raised by the events of the Holocaust as they apply in today's world."³ Regarding the pedagogy of memory, one must take into account the issues of identity, in both the intercultural and intergenerational dialogues (Bar-On 1997), and respect the multiple perspectives (von Borries 2000) of the dialogue of memories between different groups of descendants of victims, perpetrators or bystanders, rescuers and collaborators. The latter approach does not seek to encourage the participants to identify with the victims; it does not follow the theory that such identification fosters empathy or prevents future crimes. Rather, it encourages participants to consider diverse perspectives, including that of the perpetrators and their helpers. It enables participants to understand that it is ultimately more frightening to see oneself as a potential perpetrator than as a victim, an awareness that is historically more plausible and yet mentally more distressful for the subject than

³ See www.holocausttaskforce.org/education/guidelines-for-teaching/what-to-teach-about-the-holocaust.htm.

the more widespread practice of taking on the victim's perspective (von Borries 1998, 182–183). Confronting multiple perspectives deconstructs the vision of actors as a uniform group and prompts to adopt various perspectives, which in turn favours auto-reflexivity and the emergence of dilemmas.

The Programme and the Central Elements of the Approach

Three main steps composed the programme, i.e.

1. The construction of the group, centred on dealing with the current conflict, the feelings and expectations of the participants, their experiences and memories, and their representations and attitudes regarding the conflict, the occupation, the bombings, the traumas of the wars and of the Nakba.
2. Learning about the history of the Holocaust within the context of racism, Nazism and Antisemitism through a series of lectures by renowned historians which also pointed out the main historical debates.
3. A study-trip to Berlin, to reflect on memory and history in the society of the descendants of the perpetrators and to study the rise to power of the National Socialist regime and the genocidal machine in historic locations; Berlin as a meeting point of Western European and post-Soviet memory; encounters with local educators regarding their respective experiences of working on and with “intersectional meeting of memories”.

The whole process, including the lectures, alternated informational sessions with bi-national and uni-national debriefing periods. These sessions were crucial to the process because they give space to speak out about emotions and fears, and ensure the elaboration of the conflicts and dilemmas.

Why visit Berlin? Both sides Jewish Israelis and Arab-Palestinian Israeli citizens are involved in their own conflict, and their vision of the Holocaust focuses mainly on the suffering of the victims. This programme paid attention to the memory of the victims, but without focusing on the history of the victims. Nevertheless, in order to benefit by the “lessons of the Holocaust,” it is just as crucial to deal with the perpetrators and the society of the perpetrators, which formed the main aim of the study-trip. Berlin, and especially the House of the Wannsee-Conference – our partner for this study-trip – offer concrete possibilities to learn about the history of Nazism, the rise of power of the National Socialist party, the role of bureaucracy, the institution of state terror and the Concentration Camp system, and the decision on the “Final solution.”

Moreover, Berlin offers an insight in the way German society deals today with the memory of these events, and in the history of memorisation, the evolution of the German discourse on National Socialism and the Holocaust, the way German society dealt and still deals with the heritage of responsibility and guilt; and the way the heritage is dealt with in a multicultural society. Indeed, when it comes to learning about different memories, such as Eastern and Western German memory, or the memory of German versus that of migrant families’, one realises there too the need for a “dialogue of memories”.

Especially at historical and memorial sites, where the transformation of communicative to cultural memory (Assmann 1992) can be viewed, one becomes aware of the *history of memory* in these sites, and the clash of memories: Such as the view on the victims of the Nazi regime before and after the end of the communist regime, and the ongoing “battle for recognition” between victims of National Socialism and victims of Stalinism, where memorisation is also exploitation for political needs and the expression of power relationships.

Insights of the Research-Study

Sixteen persons participated in the programme, teachers, social workers, multipliers, half of the group Palestinian, half of them Jews, all Israeli citizens. We conducted a survey among the participants during the process in order to observe the dynamics that occur in this experience. The survey includes three sets of interviews with almost all the participants, the first a few weeks after the beginning of the programme, the second during the phase of building the historical concepts and the third during the study-trip to Berlin. Hereafter we present some selected outcomes.

“Why Learn Together About the Holocaust?”

The Palestinian participants were eager to learn about and understand their neighbours and their history, and to deal with these issues:

NHA-1⁴, teacher: *“I came to the programme because I wanted to know the suffering of the Jews. (...) I know very little (too little) on the Shoah, the Arabs know nothing, even if they live with the Jews in this country. (...)”*

HA-5, history teacher: *“My problem is the teaching of the Shoah in the Arab sector: there are only some lines in the textbook for the Bagrut. It is not enough. We teach facts without emotions. It is important to teach about the genocides, but you cannot stay with cold facts. I hope the programme will teach me how to teach also with emotions.”*

FA-9; For this social worker and activist who had already participated in many encounter programmes and training sessions, the programme seems self-evident and necessary: *“This programme is logical for me. It fits in my life, where I stand now in my life, it is like a natural continuity of the questioning and my social and political engagements until now.”*

The determination to learn about the Holocaust goes together with a desire for these Palestinians motivated by a sense of injustice, to raise awareness of their own tragedy, the Nakba:

HA-1: *“But the Jews have also to know what happened in the Nakba. (...) The participants of the programme have to visit Arab villages, to meet old people and speak with them. (...) To have peace you have to change something, you have to understand.”*

⁴The letters designate the interview: F for female, H for male, J for Jew, A for Arab/Palestinian; the numbers identify the speakers.

HA-7: *“The Arabs know more about the Shoah than the Jews about the conflict, about Palestinian culture and history, reality and facts about before 1948. This programme is an opportunity to give a message to the Jews (...). We are in a relationship between minority and majority, between powerful and less powerful. The Jewish people are looking for benefit of the Shoah. (...) In this programme, I am an ambassador to give a message to the Jews: “You must work and you must accept more [compromise] and accept more peaceful things... human acts to another people. Many people in my society don’t believe to the Holocaust.”* Evoking the rifts in Palestinian society between Palestinians of Israel and those of the Occupied Territories, he adds: *“But in this programme I am also an ambassador for the Arab side: the Israeli Arabs are unconnected with the Arab culture, we don’t belong to the Jerusalem East culture. We must work about our own people.”*

One notes that, for the majority of Palestinian participants, it is about understanding their neighbours better, neighbours with whom they believe they are destined to coexist; it is therefore important to understand their fears, and even their phobias, even if they consider these fears to be a bit exploited sometimes. But they also express a need to know, to learn, to be familiar with the history of the Shoah.

On the Jewish side, two themes predominate: the need and the desire to be heard (*“They have to know about our tragedy”*) and the need for a better understanding of the position and history of the Palestinians.

HJ-2: History teacher who often accompanies study-trips to Poland: *“It is important that Jews and Arabs deal together with all this; because the Arabs have to know.”* He adds: *“The Holocaust is ‘sitting on my neck’ ...”*

HJ-4: Educator in a community centre who often prepares Israeli students’ trip to Poland: *“My grandfather has been in the Holocaust and I have been with my grandmother in Poland. I want the Arabs to hear my story and the story of my grandfather (...). I came (to the programme) to learn about the Shoah.”*

FJ-8: *“Why this programme? I wanted to understand the other side. Everybody compares all the time the Shoah and the Nakba; on the left side as well as on the right side, this is part of everyday life in this country.”*

HJ-10: *“Why together? I want them to know better about the Holocaust; and I want to hear from the Arabs about the Nakba. (...) I’m on the right side of the political spectrum - not concerning the economical questions, but when it is related to the conflict. I hope that the programme will make me more empathic to the Arab side (...). I always want to protect my side, but I will try to be more listening.”*

In the latter statement ambivalence and fear transcend the words. The fear is not so much material as moral: abandoning the impulse to protect “one’s own side” is equivalent to doubting the moral superiority of one’s own group, and this is what is perceived as the greatest threat: having to acknowledge culpability. In spite of this fear, we see an eagerness to understand “the trauma of the Other” and to expose oneself to an “internal” conflict:

HJ-4: *“I find this programme very important, precisely because Jews and Arabs meet and learn about the conflict and about the Shoah. I really need to meet Arabs and speak with them, and tell them what I think about the situation, and listen to what they say. I don’t speak about the government, but about simple people.”*

FJ-11: *“Why study the Holocaust with Palestinians? They have to know what our fears are, our frights, to understand the Holocaust is to understand the Jews.”*

These testimonies show that participants are stimulated by the opportunity to speak *together* about the Holocaust, the conflict and the Nakba. This being said, it appears clearly that discussion of the past hinges on acknowledgement of the present.

One senses, among a majority of participants on both sides, both the conviction of having a “mission” to accomplish and the will to understand the Other. It is a fragile balance that can be upset at any moment by misunderstanding or misinterpretation, as happened during the first encounters. There were heated exchanges, for example when Jews criticised Palestinians for not distancing themselves from suicide attacks, and the latter insisted that saying one understood the attacks did not mean one condoned them.

“Holocaust and Nakba: To Compare or Not to Compare?”

When acts of violence, attacks on Israelis, or incursions of the Israeli army in the territories of the Palestinian Authority are discussed, the ever-present issue of comparison between the Holocaust and the Nakba resurfaces. This comparison can take different shapes. The very fact of placing these two chapters of history face to face is unacceptable to an important portion of Israeli public opinion. However, what historians and educationalists studying National Socialism and the Holocaust (and even those studying the Nakba) mainly criticise is the equation or simplistic equivalence between these two events. The participants in the programme too are preoccupied by this ambivalence between comparison and equation.

HA-1: For this Palestinian, who says not having received sufficient history teaching on this topic, the Holocaust is serious: “...*but the Nakba is much bigger than the Shoah.*” He adds: “*In the past, in my family and in my village, they believed that it was a big joke. But today it has changed; I think they have changed their ideas, and they think it is a tragedy.*”

This viewpoint – an exception in the group – contradicts that of another Palestinian who is a member of the communist party and has been teaching the Holocaust in the Israeli-Arab school sector for many years.

HA-3: “*I come from a communist family where nobody ever doubted about the Shoah. It is forbidden to say it is the same; I refuse to ‘put a level’ to the Shoah and to the Nakba. It is something different. (...). The conflict between Arabs and Israel it’s another conflict, a conflict about something, a material thing, but in Germany the conflict, what happened to the Jewish, was not a material thing.*”

Another history teacher concurs, but goes further

HA-5: saying “*It is not the same,*” and adds “*but with time the two get closer.*”

HA-7: Another participant shares this view “... *it is not the same, but with time you can do the same to another people.*”

Several Palestinian participants voiced their surprise at how many Jewish participants in the group held diverging opinions – some even considering that what was happening in the present conflict was not so different from what the Nazis had done, while others refused any comparison.

In any event, several Jewish participants underlined the ever-present temptation to compare:

FJ-8: *“Everybody compares all the time the Shoah and the Nakba; on the left side as well as on the right side, this is part of everyday life in this country.”*

FJ-1: *“We are always comparing, and this also we should bring to the table. I think it is two traumatic events for each people, the Shoah and the Nakba.”*

HJ-10: *“The Holocaust is a radical situation; the Nakba is a kind of a radical situation. There is a kind of progression between the Nakba and the Holocaust. We must study what are the same and what are different elements (...) But the Arabs and the leftists tend to oppose Zionism, and they use the Holocaust to compare: ‘the soldiers are like Nazis,’ etc. – But I want to protect, I want to keep the value of the Holocaust.”*

Although there is often comparison in the narratives of our interlocutors, it generally leads – when it actually occurs – more to recognition of indeterminate similarities than to a clear equation of historical facts. The question of comparison is mainly raised in terms of struggle for recognition of the own identity and the recognition of the suffering endured.

This shows that, although we can easily compare, judge, and prioritise in legal terms deeds, crimes and offences, the same does not go for psychological wounds and moral suffering. The latter cannot be measured against a scale; each tragedy generates distinctive individual and collective suffering that must be acknowledged as such. Confusing the need for recognition with historical judgements or political acts induces secondary victimisation in the minds of the people involved, which could make them even more impermeable to the suffering of others, in some cases. This might be due to the fear that recognising the Other’s suffering implies in fine to acknowledge the collective culpability of one’s group. Nevertheless, empathy for the suffering of others is one of the pillars of peace education for numerous authors such as Salomon (Salomon 2002).

“Us” and “Them” Identifications, Distanciation, Loyalty, Solitude

How do the participants in the programme feel during “bi-national” and “uni-national” group encounters? What do they say about their own people and about the others and how do they situate themselves within the group? The participants’ respective circles are intrigued by the programme. Participation in the programme is sometimes approved sometimes criticised. Taking too great an interest in the lot of the Others is, at best, not very well understood, at worst seen as a betrayal of the interests of one’s own side. We observe that participants anticipate or internalise these criticisms, and are worried by them.

HA-1: *“I live in a Bedouin village; in my family we speak all the time about the Nakba; and here I am studying the Shoah. (...) My father didn’t speak with me about these things. I am building my ideas about how to teach to my son what is the Shoah and what is the Nakba; how to live with the Jews in school.”*

HJ-10: A teacher of Moroccan origin who teaches to students with learning and social difficulties, mostly also of Moroccan origin. *“Oriental Jews are opposed to the Arabs. My project is to bring together both of them, Oriental Jews and Arabs, they have lot of common interests, both are disadvantaged. Sometimes I say to my students that they are Oriental and they say they hate Arabs, and I say you, yourself, you look like Arabs and you sound like Arabs; and I say ‘you are Arab Jews,’ and they are very surprised in the beginning, they are screaming and do not accept, but after that they say ‘what you say is interesting, we want to think about this.’ When you criticise the Arabs, you criticise yourself. (...) My colleagues say ‘you are a communist,’ but my family, where I come from is very rightist.”*

Some Jewish participants feel concerned by the lack of interest shown by their students for tragic historical events other than their own, and their sometimes simplistic vision of Arabs.

HJ-2: *“I am also guide for the trips to Auschwitz, and I went several times to Poland with Israeli students. Their only interest is the Shoah; I regret that the other genocides, like Rwanda for example, do not interest them at all.”*

FJ-11: Teacher of recent history at a religious school: *“When I was in school myself, nobody told me about the Nakba (in the late 80s), we only studied Arab culture, and it was very boring. (...) Today as a teacher I try to bring also this side to the class. When we speak about Arabs in the class, I ask them about the difference between Arabs and Muslims, so they said ‘Arabs are terrorists.’ I want to show that everything needs a definition. Arab is not a terrorist. Don’t put them in the same category. So I speak about the religion, and about nationalism, and about Christian Arabs, and somebody said are there also Jewish Arabs? So I do something in class, which nobody did with me (...). I always try to work on definitions. I try not to put borders. (...) And my wish is that in the Palestinian side they do it also.”*

A Palestinian history teacher describes the various attitudes in his classes towards the Holocaust, which he thinks reflect the general way of thinking in Palestinian society:

HA-3: *“When I look at my students I see three types of attitudes towards the Shoah: about half of them say ‘it doesn’t bother me; a bit more than a third say ‘it is OK what Hitler did to them, it is well done for them; and about twenty percent say ‘this does interest me, and this does concern me’.”*

Some critics are also addressed to the Others, for their lack of understanding and their refusal to criticise their own people:

HJ-4: *“I think the Jews say more easily ‘sorry for what happened in the Nakba,’ they have a better understanding of the Arabs than the other way. They, the Arabs, don’t say ‘we are sorry,’ they say ‘it is you the Jews who have done this or that.’ The Arabs put a wall between us.”*

These responses show the significance of the walls separating both groups, not just the concrete walls, but also the walls made of images and representations; however, the participants in the programme strove to break through these walls one way or another, but trying no to “betray” their own people.

It was striking to hear several participants speak of their feeling of loneliness within their uni-national project group, in spite of the overall climate of understanding that marked the process; furthermore, they seemed to be unaware that other colleagues had the same feelings. They said they felt alone and that their attitude was misunderstood when they were conciliatory and showed empathy for the Others; they felt pressured by the members of their community or by radical leaders.

Their comments show that beyond ethnic boundaries, the boundaries between political affiliations also shape the encounters.

FA-9: a young Palestinian woman: *“Sometimes I feel very alone; I wanted to leave the group. The Jews tell me that I am an extremist, but they want me to stay. (...) But sometimes the Palestinians in the group don’t understand me; they don’t tell what they think. (...) I want to leave the classical scheme: the Palestinians accuse the Jews and the Jews say they are “sorry.” We play very well at this game.”*

FJ- 8: *“I am in the middle, I am the only immigrant, I have another experience. I am a Jew, but I don’t agree with the Jews.”*

HA-3: *“I am different from my friends from the Arab sector, because I’m coming from a political family, a family that believes in communism and that is not of the traditional Arab education. I am Muslim but I believe in other ideologies and what comes from the European Philosophical tradition. (...) I have two conflicts, a conflict in my society because I am Muslim with communist ideology, and we have the conflict between the Arabs and between the Jewish in this state. (...) Yes I make big efforts to be fair and balanced, (...) this is why I feel that I am alone in the group, and sometimes it is difficult (...) But even if I feel alone, it is very important for me to come to the programme (...) people like me have to sound their voice.”*

New Dilemmas

The group process alternating bi-national and uni-national sessions is an interesting method for questioning the issues of identity.

HJ-4: *“This is the first time that I am in an encounter group between Jews and Arabs; and I am very happy to participate; what happened during the last two days (of session) doesn’t make me change my mind.”*

HJ-10: *“The leftists have like a mantra: ‘we are all human beings’. But even if he asserts not sharing this mantra, he goes on: “In this programme I really have the feeling that we are all alike. I did not change my opinion, but my feelings are different, not my opinion, but my feelings.”*

FJ-11: *“I am ... It’s funny X told me: ‘I am left wing, but I agree with you.’ He thinks I am right wing – I am used to that... I try not to put borders between religious and non-religious, between right and left.”*

Combining lectures with a process of encounters creates a special impetus to the reflection. History presentations had a great impact on some discussions, such as the lesson on intentionalist and functionalist theories regarding the Nazis’ extermination policy. Participants were astonished to discover during this talk that Hitler had never given the slightest explicit order for the annihilation of the Jews; this led them to reflect on responsibility, civic-mindedness and democracy. Reflection on history obliged them not only to take into account the suffering of the victims, but also confronted them with the issue of the responsibility, not only of perpetrators, but as well of collaborators, bystanders or resistance fighters.

HA-3: After the lecture mentioned above: *“It makes me think about what is going on in the West Bank, when a group of soldiers enters to a Palestinian house, and some soldiers are doing an army activity and two or three others are stealing something, taking the money. I am not comparing, but I realise that some of the things they do are similar.”*

HA-7: *“Hitler did not really give any orders. This shows that each has a part of responsibility – technical, bureaucratic, the leaders, the workers. (...) The Palestinians have to learn all about the Holocaust, even if they did not participate in it actively; they stayed passive, they waited for the international community to find a solution.”*

HJ-4: *“Next month, when I will be in the Miluim (army-reserve), and I find myself at a check-point, I will verify ten times before saying or doing something. And if, as a soldier, I get an order, I will try to avoid being a perpetrator. (...) I hope that this programme will change me, will change my attitude to the situation.”*

Maybe the sharing of their respective dilemmas helps more to bring participants together than seeking empathy for their respective circumstances or suffering.

FA-9: *“[At the beginning of the process] I didn’t trust. I said things, but they didn’t listen. Now I become more critical, more reflexive, and I started to really listen. For example, when X said that he was in the army, and the other soldiers had beaten the Palestinians, I understood that he was really not at ease with that. (...) The process [of our group encounters] with this particular content this is really a challenge for both groups, it is really difficult for both sides.”*

HJ-2: *“The last trips, when I accompanied groups to Auschwitz I had the feeling that it was like these children go to a temple, like going to a Mecca, to a kind of ... yes, kind of kitsch. (...) On one side, I feel myself Zionist and I am happy to live in Israel. But on the other side, I feel that I understand better the Palestinians, the Nakba. Before, I didn’t think of it so much. I understand with feelings. But we have no other country. (...) It is as if I have two voices inside me,”* He turns to the interviewer: *“Do you think it is OK to keep both voices inside me?”*

In fact, he points at two dangers he is aware of, because the Holocaust is far too important for him: the risk of sanctification or sacralisation of the Holocaust, of conferring on it a religious status and inviting to ritualised pilgrimage, which goes against historical learning and possible understanding. And secondly, he points out the risk of reification of the Holocaust and of its memory being transformed into what he calls “kitsch,” Jewish identity that can be bought like a souvenir. At the same time, he is becoming more and more aware of the situation of the Palestinians, although he is afraid to think of the consequences, which puts him in a new dilemma. Thus, new dilemmas are emerging around how the figure of the victim is perceived.

HA-7: Comparing the figures of the perpetrators, the victims and the bystanders, and evidently speaking about Palestinians today, rather than about Jews during the Holocaust: *“The most difficult is to be a victim, to always look for the accountable. You are never only a victim; you have to do the work yourself.”*

FJ-1: *“I teach the recent history of Israel, we start 48 or before, and we speak about the people who came from the Holocaust and wanted to immigrate, and how the Israeli accepted the survivors, the Eichmann trial. The students are very interested, but they don’t understand at all, how they were received. Nowadays it is very different, now we like the weak, and we understand what happened to the survivors. But today the question is: Who are the weak? (...) We are always sorry for the weak. My students have the feeling to be the strong ones. But who are the weak nowadays?”*

Maybe the status of victimhood seems not so desirable any more after all, which might eventually put an end to competition among victims.

The “Others” Are Not Such a Monolithic Group

Reflection on the Other's as well as on one's own environment shows a gradual break-up of the homogeneous image of both groups. Some participants are surprised to observe the heterogeneity of the other group. The monolithic mental image of the Other corresponds to a well-known mechanism of social psychology, wherein the lack of differentiation of the “Others” (“they” are all the same) contrasts with a differentiated “us.” But as Bar-On and Maoz (2001) point out, social psychology proposes not only a model to explicate the shaping of the social identity vis-à-vis the external Other – the enemy acting as a catalyst for the cohesion of the group. These authors define monolithic identity as a closed identity that accepts neither contradiction nor opposition, and which strives to remain in force by means of a strong defence. They consider dialogue as a means of progressing from a monolithic identity to a concept of identity that acknowledges the diversity of its different components.

In many of their statements, participants of the programme evoked dilemmas and dissonances. For instance in the discourse of some of the Jews, who hesitate: “*yes, but we have no other place*”, anticipating the Palestinians' request to return to their former land; at the same time, by saying this, they implicitly admit the existence of this option. The dissonances are evidence of the discovery of contradictions in one's own discourse, or in the discourse of one's group, or of the contradictions between opinions and emotions. Thus, rather than going on blaming the others, participants start asking questions about themselves. When their voices express different stands in a single narrative, they show the multiple attitudes and emotions that coexist within themselves. At this point there is a certain discomfort, as in the case of the soldier who disagrees with what other soldiers are doing, and the sympathetic response of his Palestinian colleague, which marks by his empathy another dissonance.

The Study-Trip to Berlin

The participants in this programme carry with them the context of the conflicting discourses on the Holocaust that surround their daily life. Visiting historical locations together makes the effect of these discourses on their personal representations even more salient. The differences between the Israeli Jews and Israeli Palestinians in undertaking this trip were obvious to us as organisers, a dissymmetry that, at first sight, struck the Palestinians more than the Jews; even so the study trip was not centred on the Jewish suffering. Whereas the Jews could have the feeling of acquiring links with the past – though on the territory of the perpetrators – for the Palestinians it could seem as if they were visiting a “Jewish story.” As they put it, it

was an effort for the Palestinians to come to Berlin, and it meant dealing with ambivalent feelings:

FA-9: *“I’m here because I want to be close to this issue, to the Holocaust. So I make an effort. I came toward a space in Germany, a Jewish space that is not my space. And coming here is an effort emotionally to (...) be at places that are Jewish places and German places. As a Muslim it’s an effort for me to be here. Not all the Muslims come here. (...) It is not of my identity. (...) Palestinians say ‘Why should you learn about the Holocaust? (...) This experience (sigh) helps me to understand more and more the Jewish Israeli identity, to be close to the Israeli society (...). But I really want the Israelis to confront what they did to the Palestinians.”*

She makes clear how difficult it is to explain to her entourage why she goes to Berlin and deals with the Holocaust, instead of dealing with the fate of the Palestinians. But this raises the more general question: is it because of our identity that we must be “close to the Holocaust?” Interestingly, this person emphasises the Muslim part of her identity more than the Palestinian part in speaking about her difficulty.

It is important to acknowledge the difficulties and efforts it took for the Palestinians to come to Berlin in order to be able to learn *together* with the Israeli Jews about the Holocaust. The difficulty reveals the effect of public discourses on the Holocaust, in which some Israeli and Arab discourses mirror each other: on the one hand trying to justify the Israeli state or current Israeli policy through the experience of the Holocaust, and on the other hand trying to de-legitimise the Israeli state by denying the Holocaust.

On the Jewish-Israeli side, sharing this trip with Palestinians raised the question of how to connect with them, and how they would connect with the Holocaust. There was a persistent fear of equating the Holocaust and the Nakba:

FJ-12: *“It wasn’t easy for me to come to this group, I still have doubts, I have to dialogue with myself, I mean inner dialogue...? (...) there should be a dialogue, (...) about the Holocaust; it was very interesting to see how it can be connected to the Palestinians ... (...) I came to a group, of which the main issue was the Holocaust, and quickly, the discussion was about the Nakba (...) trying to, in some ways ... to compare between the Nakba and the Holocaust and for me it was still something that hmm...is incomparable. (...)”*

As several of the participants repeated in the interviews, the facilitated meetings of the encounter process, even during the study-trip, formed a crucial element for overcoming fear, anger, sadness and mistrust. The facilitators helped them, and in that respect the uni-national meetings were crucial, to gain better understanding of their own feelings and of the feelings of the Others.

The trip to Berlin was an opportunity to discover the extreme complexity of Nazi policy towards political opponents and groups targeted by racial policies. And Berlin was also the opportunity to discover a city of divided history and memory, its process of reunification, and its way of dealing openly with its controversial past.

The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe impressed most of the participants of the group positively.

HA-3: *“(...) the most important thing that felt to me is the monument in Berlin, in the central place. I connected with this monument, (...) and I think it’s very, very strong.”*

FA-9: *“Yes. I like the memorial (...) it is very accessible to people and invites people to be in, to laugh and to be sad, to talk ... the memorial as base of life, it’s not a museum, (...) and I see people from different backgrounds, coming to this place and have nice time and taking photo (...) and I sit between the stones and it’s a place where you can also think about things. (...) it is an open place and it’s also an open narrative; because everybody who can come here can bring his daily narrative,... it is not making a narrative for you– I think it’s good.”*

This reflects the feeling of many that the memorial does not impose a certain vision of the Holocaust, nor a precise narrative, and leaves visitors free to follow their own thoughts; it makes an important statement in the surrounding context of conflicting narratives that respond more to political needs than to ethical or historical reflections.

An important visit that made a deep impression on the participants was that of the former Sachsenhausen concentration camp, which made clear the complexity of Nazi policy towards various inmates, from political opponents to victims of Nazi racial policy, as well as the complexity of the concentration camp system. It was reinforced by a crucial moment for the group, when one Jewish participant held a short ceremony in memory of his father’s family, a moment marked by deep emotion and empathy. The expression of this empathy is reflected in the words of two participants, which echo each other:

HA-3: *“What is important to say to them, is that I am **connected** with him, with his pain, and with his ... feelings about what happened with his family. (...). I told him... after the presentation, and I think that this matter gives him more acceptance. Because I think that the Arab participant of the group, it is very important to them ... to say that we are in solidarity with you, we are with you we are feeling with you, and I think that we want to change this image, that the Arabs... are not connected with this event, with the Shoah.”*

HJ-2 (moved): *“When I told about my grandfather that died in Buchenwald, my uncle that died in the airplane, I felt that the group – all the group, Israelis and Palestinians ... all of them ... were with me. And – the Palestinians ... all of them come to me and tell me ‘it was really important to listen that story’ and to know my story of the Holocaust of mine, of the Jewish people and ... I want to know about the...Holocaust of them, the Nakba. It’s the first time, in this trip I learned to know, to recognise their story. Before the trip it was an Arab, now I see, I saw a **human being**, and I talk to him and he talk to me. And I want to say another thing: it was really interesting to visit in Berlin to see the situation with the Muslim and Turkish and anti-Semitism and all of the...(...) before this trip to Berlin, every time I said the Shoah it’s not comparable, the Shoah was the biggest very suffering – now I say suffering is suffering, I’m not comparing with you ... for what to compare...for what?”*

During the visits of memorials sites, the images of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict occurred to some of the participants; not in terms of equation and analogy between the Holocaust and the Nakba as historical events, but rather, as an expression of associations and representations of resemblance: namely, about how a population deals with its past, how a population confronts its historical tragedies and responsibilities, and therefore, how it could contribute to preserving the memory of those who have suffered or been killed. Indeed, we came across the “Stolpersteine”⁵, brass stones that have been embedded in the pavement in front of houses, from which persons have been deported by the Nazis, in order to remember the fate of that particular person having lived in that house. One of the Jewish-Israeli participants

⁵ See www.stolpersteine.com.

evoked the possibility that “*maybe we should think of putting this kind of stones in front of houses where Palestinians have been expelled*” – words which form an answer to the demand of one of the Palestinians: “*But I really want the Israelis to confront what they did to the Palestinians.*” Later, when this Palestinian participant heard about the idea of the stones for expelled Palestinians, the answer was “*I think this is (silence) something that it’s ... big... it’s big for me.*”

The participants in the trip to Berlin experienced that the suffering of “their” people has been recognised by the Others, what concurs with Honneth’s view on recognition, according to which social conflicts do not originate exclusively in the struggle for the distribution of material resources or rights, but rather in the struggle for moral justice (Honneth 1995). The experience of acknowledgement also made the participants aware that recognising the suffering of others does not mean giving up one’s own identity and claims. In this sense, recognition of the Holocaust and the Nakba can be considered as a basis preparing future reconciliation between the two people by creating a relationship of mutual recognition.

A Contribution to a Culture of Mutual Recognition? What Is Transferable to Other Contexts?

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict will certainly not be solved by an encounter programme, nor will the asymmetrical power context be modified by the process. Furthermore, the importance of the political and social environment in which such a process takes place should not be underestimated: When the context is favourable, such initiatives benefit from political and social support and belong to the mainstream discourse. Conversely, in situations of tensions and violence, it becomes difficult not only for the participants, but the facilitators themselves have to go against the tide.

However, if we consider that the asymmetry is not only material, but also symbolic, and includes discursive power, small changes can occur. Discourses and convictions are based on representations, which are the prime target of the programme. A modest aim can be “to change one’s perception of the Other, as well as to modify one’s own belief and personal opinions about the Other as much as about one’s own group” (Salomon 2002: 9).

This project deals with *structured* encounters, with a process in which the participants take part of their own free will. This process requires socio-educational and historical concepts. The guiding principles of this programme, the philosophy and combination of the three core elements – i.e. encounter process, lectures, study-trip in the country and to Berlin – form valid principles that could be adapted to various contexts and target groups. These principles yet include the following crucial corner-points:

1. The bi-national setting: the importance of a shared setting, of a Jewish-Palestinian co-direction and co-facilitation of the project and the process, as symmetrical as possible.
2. Every experience is unique and has to be recognised – especially if it is a traumatic experience. It is important to be aware that recognising victims’ *experiences*

does not mean turning these into victims' *identities*. Also, traumatic experiences cannot be measured, nor put into hierarchies; but the related crimes can indeed be assessed and put into a hierarchy.

3. Let's maintain the distinction between history and memory: The focus of this project is on historical learning and not on commemoration; keeping alive the memory of the murdered people is important, but the aim is not to widen commemoration ceremonies. As it was said repeatedly during the conference "European Muslims' Perceptions of the Holocaust", 2–4 June 2010, "the aim is not to make the Palestinians recognise the Jewish suffering", but to share the universal dimensions of the Holocaust, which includes also learning about the perpetrators' ideology and society, about bureaucracy, and about the role of bystanders.
4. Dealing with historical facts and interpretations also needs dealing with emotions, fears, anger, troubles, dilemmas, difficulties of facing contradictory views within the own group; this points to the crucial importance of a facilitated group process, allowing self-reflection and confrontation in a productive way.

Recognition creates recognition. The paradoxical situation occurred, that whilst no commemoration was planned in that programme, a Jewish participant initiated a small ceremony, which produced a spontaneous recognition by both Jews and Palestinians. Learning together about the history of the Holocaust, in a context of divided memory, creates an opportunity to "think the history in common", as used to say Edward Said. It means both: thinking jointly, as well as thinking both histories, without any attempt to equate them.

References

- Assmann, Jan. 1992. *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*. München: C.H. Beck.
- Bar, Haviva, and David Bargal. 1995. *Living with the conflict: Encounters between Jewish and Palestinian Israeli youth*. Jerusalem: Institute for Israeli Studies.
- Bar-On, Dan. 1997. *Furcht und Hoffnung. Von den Überlebenden zu den Enkeln, drei Generationen des Holocaust*. Hamburg: Evangelischer Verlag EVA.
- Bar-On, Dan. 2001. *Die "Anderen" in uns: Dialog als Modell der interkulturellen Konfliktbewältigung*. Hamburg: Ed. Körber-Stiftung.
- Bar-On, Dan, and Ifat Maoz. 2001. Der innere und der äußere 'Andere'. In *Die "Anderen" in uns: Dialog als Modell der interkulturellen Konfliktbewältigung*, ed. Dan Bar-On, 17–26. Hamburg: Ed. Körber-Stiftung.
- Bar-Tal, Daniel. 2002. The elusive nature of peace education. In *Peace education: The concept, principles, and practices around the world*, ed. Gavriel Salomon and Baruch Nevo, 27–36. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Bar-Tal, Daniel. 2007. Sociopsychological foundations of intractable conflicts. *American Behavioral Scientist* 50(11): 1430–1453.
- Chaumont, Jean-Michel. 1997. *La concurrence des victimes: Génocide, identité, reconnaissance*. Paris: La Découverte.
- Eckmann, Monique. 2004. *Identités en conflit, dialogue des mémoires: Enjeux identitaires dans les rencontres intergroupes*. Genève: ies editions.

- Galtung, Johan. 1998. *Frieden mit friedlichen Mitteln: Friede und Konflikt, Entwicklung und Kultur*. Opladen: Leske und Budrich.
- Haddad, Kévin, Altay A. Manço, and Monique Eckmann (eds.). 2009. *Antagonismes communautaires et dialogues interculturels: Du constat des polarisations à la construction des cohésions*. Paris: l'Harmattan.
- Halabi, Rabah, and Ulla Philipps-Heck. 2001. *Identitäten im Dialog: Konfliktintervention in der Friedensschule von Neve Schalom Wahat al-Salam in Israel*, Schriftenreihe Des Deutsch-Israelischen Arbeitskreises Für Frieden im Nahen Osten e.V. 36. Schwalbach/Ts: Wochenschau.
- Honneth, Axel. 1995. *The struggle for recognition: The moral grammar of social conflicts*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Maoz, Ifat. 2000. Power relations in intergroup encounters: A case study of Jewish-Arab encounters in Israel. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 24: 259–278.
- Maoz, Ifat. 2002. Conceptual mapping and evaluation of peace education programs: The case of education for coexistence through intergroup encounters between Jews and Arabs in Israel. In *Peace education: The concept, principles, and practices around the world*, ed. Gavriel Salomon and Baruch Nevo, 259–270. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Margalit, Avishai. 2002. *The ethics of memory*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Salomon, Gavriel. 2002. The nature of peace education: Not all programs are created equal. In *Peace education: The concept, principles, and practices around the world*, ed. Baruch Nevo and Gavriel Salomon, 3–14. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- von Borries, Bodo. 1998. Erlebnis, Identifikation und Aneignung beim Geschichtslernen. *Neue Sammlung Jg* 38(1): 171–202.
- von Borries, Bodo. 2000. Interkulturelle Dimensionen Des Geschichtsbewusstseins. In “*Erziehung nach Auschwitz*” in der multikulturellen Gesellschaft: *Pädagogische und soziologische Annäherungen*, ed. Bernd Fechner, Gottfried Köbler, and Till Liebertz-Groß, 119–139. Weinheim: Juventa Verlag.
- Zertal, Idith. 2004. *La nation et la mort: la Shoah dans le discours et la politique d'Israël*. Paris: la Découverte.

Speech Acts. Observing Antisemitism and Holocaust Education in the Netherlands

Remco Ensel and Annemarike Stremmelaar

Over the last few years, resistance to Holocaust education among Muslim students has twice been big news in the Netherlands. “One in five history teachers in the four big cities has experienced being prevented or nearly prevented from broaching the subject of the Holocaust because especially Muslim students had difficulties with it.” With this news item, of April 2010, the weekly *Elsevier* engendered much debate. The article was based on a survey among in total 339 history teachers of secondary schools all over the Netherlands (Stiphout and Deijkers 2010). The conclusion of the article grew into a much-cited spectre and became the central issue of two parliamentary debates on antisemitism held on 24 June 2010 and 9 March 2011. In conclusion of the first debate, on the initiative of a Christian Union Member of Parliament, a motion was carried that quoted the article: “...concluding that it appears from research that one in five history teachers in the four big cities has experienced being prevented or nearly prevented from broaching the subject of the Holocaust because especially Muslim students had difficulties with it...” In the second debate, the House demanded of the authorities that they come down on especially Moroccan boys and voted to devote special attention to the Holocaust in education: according to the Party for Freedom and the Socialist Party, “especially Muslim students intimidate their teachers.” In September 2011, a Christian Union Member of Parliament stated that some schools already “dare no longer discuss the Holocaust because they are afraid to insult Muslims.”¹ This statement went even further than

This chapter was translated from Dutch by Han van der Vegt.

¹ The interview appeared in *Reformatisch Dagblad*, 13 September 2011.

R. Ensel (✉) • A. Stremmelaar

e-mail: r.ensel@niod.knaw.nl; a.stremmelaar@niod.knaw.nl

the *Elsevier* article. It remains unclear on what knowledge the Member of Parliament based it. On the correspondence page of *De Volkskrant*, two writers, referring to the same article, stated that “the Muslim student closes himself off against the Holocaust” (Vermeulen and Pattupilohy 2010).

The remarkable attention for the *Elsevier* survey touches on several aspects of Holocaust education in the Netherlands during the first decade of the twenty-first century. The worries voiced in the parliamentary debate were part of a more general concern about the assumed lack of integration of Muslim students in school and of Muslims in Dutch society (Kleijwegt 2005). Another recent expression of that concern is the theme issue of the journal *De Groene Amsterdammer* of April 2011. In a translated contribution by Sam Schulman on “Holocaust hegemony and its moral pitfalls” the statement was presented that Holocaust education was a failed project from the previous century (Schulman 2011a, b). This statement was contested by historian Diennek Hondius, author of *Oorlogslessen. Onderwijs over de oorlog sinds 1945 (War Lessons. Education about the war since 1945)* (2011), the only monograph on Dutch Holocaust education since the end of World War II. But it remains striking that the matter that held politics and the media in thrall for the last decade, unwillingness among specific students to receive education on the Shoah, remains undiscussed in her study. Nor are the problems concerning disturbances of commemorations connected to education part of a second study on this subject, resulting from the same project: *Rondom de stilte. Herdenkingscultuur in Nederland (Concerning Silence. Remembrance Culture in the Netherlands)* (2011) by Rob van Ginkel.²

The 2010–2011 commotion caused by the *Elsevier* survey and its spin-off, the theme issue of *De Groene Amsterdammer*, was a resurgence of the social indignation and concern of 2003–2004. In the meantime, it had become customary to talk of Muslims where earlier the term Moroccans was more common. This indicates the importance of taking into account the meaning of speech, of vocabulary and context within which speech is uttered in the analysis of antisemitism and the debate on antisemitism.

In this contribution, we present our findings of speaking, mumbling, humming and abstaining from speech in a series of Holocaust lessons in six different classes in secondary education at two Amsterdam schools. This concerned a separate teaching package, in which two peer educators taught on the Holocaust and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The teaching package was outside the regular curriculum. For us, this offered an opportunity to observe directly how students speak about Jews and the Holocaust. In the Dutch literature on this subject, the focus is on the teacher as object of research. Nearly never were observations from the classroom included in a publication (cf. Boersema 2004; Noorda et al. 2004). The school lesson as a specific form of institutionalised social interaction is an excellent occasion not only

² Van Ginkel (2011) mentions the incidents once but considers the attention overstressed. Hondius (2010) wrote on the instrumentalisation of the commemoration of the Moroccan soldiers who fought in World War II and were buried in The Netherlands.

to record students' statements and consider these as building blocks for narratives about Jews, but also to observe in what interactional situations students arrive at these statements.³ In order to gain a better understanding of verbal and non-verbal communication in the classroom, we have freely made use of the speech act theory by John L. Austin and John R. Searle. Searle states that any utterance should be seen as an act behind which an intention is hidden: "Stating is performing an act" (Austin 2004, 138; Searle 1969). The communicative interactive lies in the ability of a speaker to transmit the desired intention and that of the hearer to receive it. The speech act theory departs from the more general idea that an utterance may primarily be understood as a social fact or even a performance (Butler 1997a, b). After a historical overview and a short discussion of the survey, we will use our contribution to investigate this idea on the basis of two cases: teachers' workshops of the Anne Frank House and our fieldwork at school.

Public Commotion and Moral Panic

The context of the fieldwork at school was formed by the debate held during the first decade of the twenty-first century in the Netherlands about antisemitism in the classroom. In the wake of the shock over the attack on the WTC in 2001, initially one teacher presented himself in the press as a whistle blower with the observation that his students refused to talk about Jews and the Shoah. This concerned a small group of boys, "nearly always of Moroccan extraction". In his Amsterdam vmbo class (literally, "preparatory middle-level applied education"), in the heat of a fierce discussion on 9/11, the teacher had also been attacked physically. His initiative to raise the issue of the antisemitism he had experienced in the press invited more testimonies.⁴ Apparently, this was not a private conflict, but a problem experienced more broadly in society. The assessment that the issue ran deeper was strengthened by linking happenings at school to a series of incidents at the annual commemoration of World War II. In this respect, the Remembrance of the Dead on 4 May 2003 was a turning point in the judgement of the problematic interpretation of the Holocaust among children of Moroccan immigrants. The events of 4 May in the Amsterdam district of De Baarsjes received most publicity. A multicultural commemoration service had been organised by situating part of the commemoration at the nearby mosque. Among other things, the attendants were shown a film about the contribution of Moroccan

³The fieldwork in class took place within the framework of our research project "The Dynamics of Contemporary Antisemitism in the Netherlands" that aims to investigate representations of Jews in the Netherlands since World War II. The project is located at the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies and is funded by The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (programme "Framing Conflict in Society"). See www.dutchantisemitism.nl.

⁴"Allah zal ze krijgen", Het Parool, 6 October, 2003.

soldiers during World War II. Subsequently, wreaths were laid at the monument. “The horn blew, silence fell.” Then, a group of youngsters of 10–15 years old started chanting “Joden die moeten we doden” (“We must kill the Jews.”). During six other neighbourhood-oriented commemorations that year, similar incidents occurred. These varied from chanting slogans up to disturbing or destroying wreaths. One of these incidents got attention in the national press under the heading of “wreath football”. Sometimes during the commemorations, attendants referred to the Conflict in the Middle East by shouting, chanting slogans or distributing pamphlets.⁵

These disturbances led to much commotion and public debate, not only in Amsterdam but throughout the whole country. An investigation organised under pressure of the events, concluded that the national framework of World War II historiography was not attractive to “immigrants”. A much more global and multifaceted perspective was called for.⁶ The project in which we participated as “field workers” and which combines Holocaust education and education in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, also originated in the turmoil of 4 May 2003.

During this period, there were all sorts of developments. The CIDI, one of the antisemitism monitors, announced that the number of incidents had fallen during this period, but that for school children, the situation was deteriorating. The organisation regularly received messages of children being bullied at school for their Jewish identity, confronted with hissing noises and chants of “We must kill the Jews”. A boy was greeted at school with antisemitic songs and addressed as “Hey, Jew”.⁷ It appeared that the Anne Frank House was often consulted by students “of schools with a mixed and Moroccan population. Many teachers do not know how to deal with the situation.”⁸ Already in 2002, the Foundation had started with a teachers’ programme. A spokesman for a consultation institution of Jewish organisations (*Centraal Joods Overleg*) indicated that “Jewish children move from their own school to a Jewish school because of antisemitism, teachers are afraid to bring up the Holocaust, while other teachers are succeeding very well.”⁹

⁵ Handelingen Gemeenteraad Amsterdam (“Minutes City Council Amsterdam”): “Beantwoording schriftelijke vragen van de raadsleden de heren H. Bakker en H.H.G. Bakker inzake verstoring dodenherdenking”, 18 June 2003.

⁶ Whereupon NIOD arranged, by order of Forum, Instituut voor Multiculturele Ontwikkeling, for the study by Ribbens et al. (2008).

⁷ “Uw brief over antisemitisme in Nederland”. Letter Minister of Education to CIDI, 7 September 2004; the two school incidents are mentioned in the CIDI archive, 3 August 2004 and 3 December 2004.

⁸ Report of the conference: Ferry Wielinga, “De representatie van de Holocaust in de multiculturele samenleving”, 9 March 2004, De Unie, Rotterdam [documentation Karen Polak, Anne Frank House].

⁹ In 2002, a report by the Interior Intelligence Service appeared on Muslim education in the Netherlands without the mention of antisemitism (BVD, *De democratische rechtsorde en islamitisch onderwijs. Buitenlandse inmenging en anti-integratieve tendensen*, 2002). In 2001, the newspaper *Trouw* issued the news that the president of a Muslim school propagated antisemitic texts. Brinkman (2005, 45–46) writing about her experiences at a Muslim primary school, discusses an incident where parents object to a history lesson on the Holocaust.

In an appeal to participate in the commemoration of Kristallnacht on 9 November of the same year, the organisers pointed out the connection between rising antisemitism and Holocaust education: “Our country is experiencing a rise of antisemitism... Education about the Holocaust is met with resistance from certain students”. Politician Frits Bolkestein spoke at the commemoration: “Who would have thought that teachers in the Netherlands would ever hesitate to teach the Shoah because of the antagonistic attitude of their Muslim students? This is a new kind of antisemitism...” Conciliatory parties pointed out that this concerned only a couple of rascals and that also “native Dutch boys disturbed commemorations”: a witness reported that on the 6th or 7th of May, he had seen “three boys – adolescents, little factories producing an excess of testosterone, not prone to self reflection – were blithely playing with some of the present wreaths... in this case, they were white boys...” “In the white village I grew up, it was no different and so it must have been throughout the times”.¹⁰ Precisely the accumulation of incidents from different spheres of society, among which education, suggested that more than mischief was behind this. The sting was moreover not in the “wreath football” but in the speaking out loud where silence was demanded. The ritual as a non-speech event had been violated.¹¹ The insulting slogans could effortlessly be compared to similar statements in the classroom and during anti-Israel demonstrations between 2000, the advent of the Second Intifada, and 2003.

The term moral panic is probably too strong, but it does describe the atmosphere surrounding integration and Holocaust education in these years.¹² Anyhow, in the following years, several initiatives were developed which might be characterised as forms of conflict resolution. In Amsterdam, an initiative was reinvigorated to have schools adopt a monument, through which students could, by means of a small story, get acquainted with the larger story of the Holocaust. The Holocaust was turned into a graphic novel and this graphic novel was distributed in schools (Heuvel 2003).¹³ Jews and Moroccans started rapping together, playing football together and sitting around the table at the mayor’s (which later developed into a “Jewish-Moroccan Network Amsterdam”). Students of one Amsterdam school paid a visit to Auschwitz, together with alderman Ahmed Aboutaleb (now Mayor of Rotterdam). Still later, Ahmed Marcouch, first district president and later Member of Parliament, proposed to make the Holocaust a fixed part of the final exams. During all the attention to the incidents at schools, in October, the Mayor of Amsterdam, Job Cohen,

¹⁰ “Niels, 19-05-2003”, Readers’ reactions on the Trouw website, on the article by Kieskamp (2006).

¹¹ To a speech event, specific regulative rules belong that determine what is appropriate. For the commemoration of the year 2004, district president Ahmed Marcouch took it upon himself to teach these rules to Moroccan boys (Interview R. Ensel with A. Marcouch, 21 April 2011).

¹² The commotion was huge, morally colored and directed at one group of population, but there were also strong counter voices, and the measures proposed were not disproportional. See Cohen (2002).

¹³ The graphic novel, an idea of the Anne Frank House, is discussed in Macgilchrist and Christophe (2011).

committed himself to support the schools. A first step towards this was a meeting of all school directors and representatives of the main commemoration committees, in December. Incidentally, perhaps ironically, the meeting was planned at the former colonial museum, where all participants were invited to visit the new exhibition “Urban Islam” prior to the meeting.

The shift in attention for Holocaust education in the light of what became known as “New Antisemitism” – also referenced in Bolkestein’s speech – (later on, it lost its popularity as a concept) was visible internationally as well. The intergovernmental body The Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research initiated a “Special Working Group on Resistances to Learning and Teaching about the Holocaust” in 2004 to discuss new challenges facing Holocaust education and research in a multicultural society.¹⁴ A year after the tumultuous year 2003, a conference took place in Rotterdam, in March 2004, on “the representation of the Holocaust in multicultural society”, organised by the Anne Frank House. A representative of the Anne Frank House explained to the attendants that all students have the right to be educated in the Holocaust, that there were all sorts of developments but that there was “an extraordinary amount of” media attention for teachers’ problems in education. One participant wished to point out that the Moroccans were wrongfully blamed, while a teacher at a Muslim school was much less concerned with the suggestion that the perpetrators were exclusively Moroccans. To him, the stigmatisation of Muslims was crucial. Everyone easily thinks: “The agitators at the Dam [during the national commemoration] were Moroccans, and therefore Muslims.” The teacher added: “They are chanting racist texts, so what? It is harsh, but these are kids. Is it really all that serious?” When he talked about the war, his Muslim students listened “with open mouths”.¹⁵

The discussions over these years make clear to what extent the naming of anti-semitism within and without education revolves around speaking, listening, around naming and attaching meaning to what is said. It is about the fact “that young people should learn to untangle a jumble of words”, a teacher stated. This could be a motto for anyone concerned with antisemitism. This also means more focus on the communicative interaction, on speech acts, in the classroom.

The Elsevier Survey

Seven years after the commotion of 2003, the survey by the journal *Elsevier* made antisemitism in the classroom once again a newsworthy issue. The teacher was central to the survey. It was striking in this respect that the heading of the web version

¹⁴ See <http://www.holocausttaskforce.org/research.html>. The Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research was founded in 1998 (www.holocausttaskforce.org).

¹⁵ Wielinga, “De representatie van de Holocaust in de multiculturele samenleving”.

of the journal article ran: “Teachers: Muslim students are having trouble with the Holocaust” but that the definitive version had opted for the easier: “Muslim students are having trouble with Holocaust education”. What was lost was the explanation that teachers had been asked for their perceptions. The questions in the survey sometimes referred to teachers’ experiences, but sometimes also to their opinions. For instance, teachers were asked: “Where do most students get their information about World War II outside of school hours? Consider here television, comic books, books, etc.” In the article, the following result was included: “no books, not even comic books but films are the source of information.” The researchers obviously might have asked the students themselves about this. And what to think of the question referring to a survey on the historical knowledge of British students. The question asked whether teachers thought that Dutch students would score better. The article then gave, under the heading, “How do the Dutch students score” percentages based on teachers’ opinions. A clear example of comparing apples (research among British students) and oranges (research among Dutch teachers).¹⁶

Eventually, in politics, the attention revolved around two of the survey’s findings. The first was that one in five history teachers in the four big cities has experienced being prevented or nearly prevented from broaching the subject of the Holocaust because especially Muslim students had difficulties with it. If one considers the above-mentioned finding of the survey a little longer, it can be boiled down to a rather complicated statement. This concerns the teachers “in the four big cities” (28 in a total of 339 interviewed) who were “prevented or nearly prevented” from teaching, “because especially Muslim students” etc. The result was 22% (6 in 28). The complex formulation of the finding had to do with the question posed. The formulation was thus literally derived from the question (which also literally found its way into the Parliamentary motion). The wording of the crucial question 21 of the survey was:

Over the last few years, some teachers have complained about the fact that they were prevented or nearly prevented from broaching the subject of the Holocaust due to dismissive reactions of especially Muslim students. Do you have similar experiences?

The options for answering were:

“yes, often,”
 “yes, sometimes” and
 “no, never”.

Because of the use of “prevented or nearly prevented” and the “especially”, the phrasing gave the respondent ample freedom. The question did not allow for possible obstruction by non-Muslim students. That is problematic, because precisely the one teacher who indicated in the questionnaire that he had even stopped teaching about the Holocaust, had experienced excessive obstruction from extreme right-wing students. The statement that (some teachers) no longer teach the Holocaust

¹⁶ The survey referred to news items from 2009 that stated that it would appear from research that British students knew little about history. See ‘Hitler was een Duitse voetbalcoach’, De Telegraaf, 6 November 2009.

due to the objections of Muslim students was not supported by the results of the survey. To put it stronger: the survey did not even feature a question on this issue. However, all commotion could be reduced to the answers to the above-mentioned question.¹⁷

The impact of the survey was huge and testified to the usual confidence in the research method of a survey initiated by a popular journal. Sadly, insight in an important issue was lacking: how do students actually talk about the Holocaust?¹⁸ From the first experiences of teachers around 2003–2004, it can be deduced that emotions play a large part in Holocaust education. These emotions are expressed in ways of speaking and being silent. Students express indignation, anger, disdain and empathy through their speech, attitude, through bodily and facial expressions. To learn about this, we should proceed to the real-life situations in the classroom.

Discussing Jews and Israel in Education

During the whole decade, the Anne Frank House has been trying to take stock of teachers' experiences. For many years now, the house has been organising workshops for teachers. The minutes of these workshops constitute an interesting source for the communicative dynamics at Dutch schools. In the years 2003–2004, there is much communication about the Holocaust, about representations of Jews and about the Middle East conflict. There is talking, shouting, rapping: "Once this subject is broached, it is hard to get them quiet", one teacher said.¹⁹ Other forms of communication are also available: from graffiti to smart phone screen savers with cartoons or photos.

The teachers are thinking about what can be said and what cannot. What is, in other words, fit to be said out loud? Do we need speech codes for broaching the subject? But what is actually said? This seems dependent on the assessment of the intentions of the student when he or she makes an utterance. What type of speech act takes place when a student makes the statement that "the Jews had it coming"? Is this meant as an argument and therefore an opening to a discussion, or should it rather be considered as an explicit way to express an emotion, in this case disenchantment? Is it meant as a way to engage in conversation about the course of the persecution of the Jews or should the utterance rather be put on a par with the popular slogan "Hamas, Hamas, Jews to the gas"? During the Anne Frank House workshops

¹⁷ More could be said about the questionnaire – for instance, there appears to be a remarkable difference between the questionnaire we received from the research office and the question forwarded to us by the authors, particularly on this matter of Holocaust education.

¹⁸ Another issue would be the tentative justification of the use of the expression "Muslim students" by the fact that a subject derived from "Islam" is broached in the classroom.

¹⁹ The following remarks are based on proceedings of a seminar "Antisemitisme op school" of the Anne Frank House, 1 October 2003 [documentation Karen Polak, Anne Frank House].

around 2003 and 2004, a way out was sought by determining what was permitted and what was not. What was the norm? The teachers were asked to determine this together. In one session, a group of teachers decided that “Jews to the gas”, hilarity about the Shoah and denial of the Shoah was *on* the edge. *Over* the edge were giving the Hitler salute, showing the swastika and shouting “Cancer Jew”. From this, we can determine that these teachers considered the denial of the Holocaust a statement of opinion by the students (made for lack of knowledge). They did not see it as an expression of anger or vituperation and (therefore) *on* and not *over* the edge. One teacher had a different way of reasoning. He stated that “ Hamas, Hamas, Jews to the gas” was *on* the edge, and not *over* it. When we try to follow the reasoning of this teacher, we can establish that he recognises the expressive power of the slogan and denies its directive or indicative aspect, but precisely because of that, he dismissed the statement as a relatively innocuous cliché. It was an insult and not a summons to others to execute a hate act or a prospect of a planned act.

As we have all learned to do in communicative interaction, teachers thus implicitly distinguish between expressive (I feel...), directive (I instruct...), commissive (I intend to...) and assertive (I propose...) utterances. When the communicative action runs smoothly, the speaker is able to transmit an utterance to the hearer with the proper intention. Sometimes, there is miscommunication. In an interview, the earlier-mentioned politician Ahmed Marcouch gave the example of an angry Moroccan man who, in the presence of others, screamed to his son or daughter or to ambulance personnel, “I am going to kill you!” When he was still working as a police officer, he noticed that his colleagues understood such an utterance as intentional instead of an expression of sentiment. In other words: according to Marcouch, the man was just angry “in the Moroccan way” and was not contemplating an honour killing or something like that.²⁰ Thanks to their shared background, Marcouch could see the true value of the speech act.

Speech acts are subject to rules and these are not recognisable to anyone. Here is an example of one teacher who, when identifying a speech act of a student as a joke, had the strategy of having the student repeat the remark. He recognised that this was not a statement, and did not need to be countered with arguments, but robbed the utterance of its expressive power (*i.e.* of its *perlocutionary* effect) – partly consisting in its shock effect – by provoking a repetition. As a speech event, a joke with its set conventions is of course much more recognisable and interpretable than other, more ambivalent speech acts (Searle 1975). Moreover, the telling of a joke depends on the common background of speaker and hearer.²¹

In another seminar in 2004, teachers were presented with utterances.²² Implicitly a similar type of interpretation of an utterance’s intention was given. To some “The Jews dominate the world” was permissible because, as we might induce, it was seen

²⁰ Interview R. Ensel with A. Marcouch, 21 April 2011

²¹ The Dutch “mop” is “a short story, ending in a punch-line, usually featuring more or less standardised characters, settings and motifs, which is transmitted orally” (Kuipers 2006).

²² Seminar “Omgaan met antisemitisme en anti-islamisme bij jongeren tegen de achtergrond van het Israëliësch- Palestijns conflict”, 18 and 25 February 2004.

as a statement and not an expression of hate or resentment. To these teachers, the utterance was open to discussion. The same went for the utterance: “The State of Israel must end.” Another teacher enthusiastically reported a debate in class on who was more like Hitler; Bush or Sharon. Apparently, this teacher thought you could have a serious conversation on the basis of this utterance. From the minutes, it appears that some teachers were seriously confused about what was allowed and how they should react to strong statements and emotions. Taking stock of the ways of speaking in the classroom and interpreting these might be a first step towards classification.

Field Work in Class

In 2004, during the commotion concerning antisemitism in the street, at commemorations and in the classroom, the idea arose in Amsterdam to combine Holocaust education with education in the Middle East conflict. This would offer students an outlet. Initially, the initiative was subsidised by the city. Project office *Diversion* designed the teaching package “World War II in perspective” which was started up locally in 2004 and nationally in 2008. It consists of a text book and a number of accompanying short videos, in which the lesson is introduced by means of images and eye witnesses.²³ There are six lessons, three on World War II, with the emphasis on the persecution of the Jews, and three on the Middle East conflict. Schools could apply for the teaching programme if they wanted to.

We visited in total 36 lessons at two different schools in lower secondary education. The students at one school were 12–13 years old, those at the other 16–17 years old.²⁴ They were presented with the same course. In the classroom, we were searching for the images, the stereotypes and stories raised in the dynamics of the lessons. As observers, we interfered as little as possible with the lessons. We silently admired the way guest teachers kept abreast and showed initiative, and the regular teachers subtly assisted when necessary. We were stunned about the ways things can go awry. Sometimes, a lesson connected to the interests and the level of the students, sometimes, it fell on deaf ears.

²³ It is beyond the scope of this contribution to enter deeper into the contents of the course material. We limit ourselves to three points. The stress on religion is remarkable, with much attention for Jerusalem as contested city of three religions. Furthermore, in the course, Great Britain is the evil colonialist that departed and left a problem it had created unresolved. Finally, the emphasis on acts of war and the role of great men is striking. Obviously, up to today, there is discussion on the combination of the two themes, the Middle-East conflict and the Shoah, within one course.

²⁴ The classes were at the educational level of vmbo and mbo. The vmbo (“preparatory middle-level applied education”) lasts 4 years, from 12 to 16 years. The mbo (literally, “middle-level applied education”) lasts 1–4 years.

Peer Educators

The Muslim peer educator tells a joke:

The teacher says: “Ahmed, you are such a good student. You are so smart, you almost seem Dutch. From now on, you are no longer called Ahmed, you are called Kees.” Ahmed/Kees goes home and proudly tells his father the news: “Dad, as from today, my name is Kees. The teacher said I was so smart that, from today, I am called Kees.” His father is incensed. “I called you Ahmed.” He beats his son black and blue. When the boy arrives in class the next day, his teacher is appalled: “But Kees, what has happened to you?” Kees answers: “Oh, Miss, I have been Dutch for only 1 day now, and immediately, a Moroccan beats me up.”

The most distinctive aspect of the programme is the use of so-called peer educators. The peers in the *Diversion* project are mostly students who appear in the classroom more or less as compeers. They are always with two, one peer with a Jewish background and one with a Muslim background. This co-hosting was the intended arrangement virtually from the beginning. The Muslim peers are not always Moroccan Dutchmen. In *Diversion*'s file are also Turkish and Palestinian Dutchmen. In this arrangement, and also in the curriculum, the increasingly strong emphasis on Muslims versus Jews is visible.

The use of peers departs from the assumption that they can employ their familiarity with the living environment of the students and their expertise from experience. In this specific teaching project, the peers again fulfil the familiar role of expert talking head in front of the class. Nonetheless, the position of the peer as guest teacher is different from that of the regular teacher. Their physical presence, verbal presentation and social interaction invite a reflection on mutual identities. By telling the joke about Ahmed/Kees, the Moroccan peer comments on the recognisable social position of the Moroccan-Dutch student, the hardly tactful father spoiling to give his children a good clouting and the paternalism of the “native” teacher. In other teaching situations, the joke as speech event will be extremely uncalled for (but see Trachtenberg 1979). In this instance, the partial self-mockery is put in service of reaching out and opening a conversation about ethnic identities. This presupposes that student and peer share the same background, the very reason why a good joke is sometimes called a tiny conspiracy between the joke teller and his audience (Kuipers 2006).

Some peers introduced themselves with a kind of conversion story, apparently intended to make contact with the students. The students were as it were invited to experience a similar conversion.

- Peer: Let me be honest. A few years back, I had very bad ideas about Jews. When I was 8 years old, I watched Al Jazeera, I watched images you should not watch as an 8-year-old. Now I know this is not right.
- Teacher: What did you think?
- Peer: Well, I thought the Jews wanted to destroy the Muslims.

The utterances of the peer should here be seen not only as a report of what had happened to him in the past, but also as an act in the present, meant to generate a specific reaction in the classroom (cf. Stromberg 1993). Another peer told that his

brothers were bullied and that he had thought in terms of “fucking Moroccans” and “fucking Muslims”. He now lives in the New West district, plays football with different nationalities, knows that little pests are only a small part of the population and are moreover cold-shouldered by their fellow-Moroccans. All of this led to a sharing of experiences in class: a teacher who was mugged and has been very circumspect in the street since then (and does not like this in herself) or a student who does not like to be identified with another population group. As will appear below, already on first contact with the peer, an invitation to far-reaching speech acts about Jews arises.

The use of peer educators is not uncontested. When during the commotion about the *Elsevier* survey, a Green Left Member of Parliament proposed to combine *Naqba* and Shoah in the curriculum, a pioneer peer educator in a newspaper opinion piece pointed out that the *Diversions* project is apparently nearly forgotten: “I was one of the peer educators then, in duos with compeers of Moroccan origin who gave a public information course in a number of meetings about the Holocaust and the Israel-Palestine conflict.” According to this former peer, Moroccan peers “in collaboration with the students, were always trying to compare and equate the suffering of the one with that of the other” (Stranders 2010). This motif of rivalry in victimhood was not prominently present during the lessons we attended. In one class, two peers got into an argument about Islam. The Jewish peer showed a television clip well-known in the Netherlands, in which a famous comedian (and friend of Theo van Gogh) is in debate with three Moroccan-Dutch programme makers about the right to ridicule Islam. The showing led to an argumentative atmosphere between the Jewish and the Moroccan peer (who admitted to “loving the prophet more than his parents”). The students were looking distinctly forlorn. Here, the problem was not that the peers broached a controversial issue. It was rather that, as opposed to the situation with the joke and that of the conversion narrative, they neglected to engage the students in the discussion.

Jews Fascinate

The probing, discussing and expressing of ethnic and religious identities is the thread running through the lesson and the social interaction in the classroom. In the back, two girls are talking softly to each other: “Is she Jewish? (whispering) Yes? Why does she know so much about Jews?” Girls whisper, boys are now and again noisy. The Jewish identity of the peer provokes many comments. There are even signs of enthusiasm and some excitement in the classroom which are lacking during the regular lesson. The pronouncement of the word “Jew” and the viewing of a real-life Jew are fascinating (Jikeli 2010). When the Jewish peer was present at the first lesson but not at the second, the students repeatedly asked where the Jewish teacher was, pronounced with a thick “J”. Once, such a conversation led to the shouting of “Yahud Yahud” and “Jew” in the classroom. In the street, such an expression could

be interpreted as antisemitic: a person may expect to be able to move in public space without being stared at due to his appearance or being shouted at (“Look, a Jew”). In class, it makes other questions possible: “What do you think of when you hear about Jews?” The students call out “Yarmulkas, Hanukkah, Cola, diamonds, they are always rich”. The peer responds: “There were also poor Jews”. What does a Jew look like? “Can people see I am a Jew”, the peer asks in reference to a question. This results in a discussion about head gear and beards. The second peer quickly googles some pictures of male orthodox Jews. “Do all Jews look like this?” “No,” the students say in unison. Then, the regular teacher interrupts: “But are you not born a Jew?” The peer explains that this is true, but not entirely. Recognition is a recurring motif and relevant in order to understand how the persecution of the Jews could take place. Peer: “How could you tell who was a Jew?” The student: “A gold star.” “No,” a second student says, “a ‘J’ in your passport.” The motif also leads to a discussion on the own Jewish “aspects”. A boy is called Levy and says he is not Jewish, the girl next to him explains that part of her family in Surinam went to the synagogue. The motif also led to a discussion of the complex origins and identities of the students. In part due to the Muslim background of many students, the otherness of the Jewish peer and Jews in general comes into focus. The self-evidence of Muslim identity is no issue. Although speaking out loud about “Jews” still causes conversation, it remains disturbing and intriguing why students do it. Presumably, naming acts as a device to come to terms with the alleged anomalous appearance of an individual Jew (be it in the classroom or in the street). Naming silences the subject into submission “even as the power of the word is imposed on her or him by others” and thus establishes the power of the speaker.²⁵

Fascination with Jews is one thing, but there are also stereotypical associations. These open up a reservoir of texts, images and also slogans, ditties and songs. This is what happened in one class. A student asks the peer: “Are you Jewish? Are you a fan of Ajax? [A football club often referred to as “the Jews”] Do you mind being Jewish? Some people hate Jews” and, a girl whispers: “Me, for instance”. In the same class, the children hum a song with the line “Where are the Jews coming from, from Israel so far away” to the tune of the so-called Smurf song. With young people outside, the students here share a common reservoir of mischievous expressions which seem to indicate a trivialisation of anti-Semitic language (Jikeli 2010).

A similar Pavlov reaction to that with “Jew” can occur with the concept of “Hamas” immediately resulting in a mumbled “Hamas, Hamas, Jews to the gas.” The mumbling indicates that the students were communicating among themselves here. Sometimes, things get worse. One student, ordered by another to be silent, says there is no need to pay attention to the video because it is only a Jew talking (by means of which the Jew is again silenced). In another class, one student in particular is constantly acting provocatively; sometimes, he is urged on, sometimes

²⁵ See on racism, ethnic name-giving and name-calling in Morocco, Ensel (1999, 17–30). Quotation in Carnegie (1996, 483).

he is corrected. The student mumbles: “ Hamas, Hamas...”. The teacher reacts: “ Act normal, please.” “ It’s just a song,” the student answers. Regularly, we hear that there is no real antisemitism behind such exclamations in the street or in the classroom. Fellow-students understand very well that the boy does not make a substantive statement, but wishes to express disdain with his mumbled remark. “ He forgot to take his pills,” one of them comments. The regular teacher takes the student outside.

The Holocaust as Big Narrative

The big narrative of the teaching programme was the persecution of the Jews. Students have the key concepts of the persecution of the Jews in World War II ready: Hitler, gas chamber, swastika, Star of David, concentration camp. Situating the events in time turned out to be a little harder. Hitler fascinated and was a source of provocation: “ Adolf Hitler, my good friend” one student called out, in another class students imitated Hitler with his moustache by putting their fingers under their noses. Hitler’s assumed Jewish background is a recurring feature: “ I have heard that Hitler’s father and mother were Jewish, that that troubled him, that is why he hated Jews.” The suggestion is also heard outside the classroom and can be problematic if the Holocaust is interpreted as a “ Jewish undertaking”. This might indicate a more general mechanism of “ perpetrator-victim reversal”. Holocaust denial happens in class – according to an experienced peer – as well as bewilderment over and mockery of the images and stories. The peer asks: “ What is resistance?” Student: “ that you lend assistance?” Peer: “ To what?” Student: “ To killing Jews?” Was this another joke, or a serious remark, made in ignorance? Our notes do not tell how the teacher and the other students took this, which might have helped in determining the answer. The dialogue shows how complicated it is to interpret an utterance. Insinuations, irony or ambiguities will always be part of speech (Searle 1975; Butler 1997a).

In students’ provocative remarks, the paradox returns that was pointed out by Schulman in his article on the supposed failure of Holocaust education: deniers often know that the Holocaust took place, especially when they equate the fate of the Palestinians to that of the Jews or try to accuse Israel of a “ new” genocide. In any case, students’ utterances should not be taken as the opening statements for a discussion. The provocative power with which boys present such remarks in class also indicates this.

The best-known person in the news is Geert Wilders. Solicited or unsolicited, his name surfaced in connection to present-day discrimination, but mostly, the peers did not react to the interest in Wilders. They did not recognise the students’ urge to discuss their preoccupation with Wilders (and his preoccupation with them).

The best-known victim is Anne Frank. Students are familiar with her biography, the Diary and the Achterhuis (visited in primary school). On the basis of their knowledge of Anne, some students remarked that they had already had “ the subject” in primary school. When the famous moving images of Anne Frank were shown,

one student asked in surprise why they did not film her longer. In another class, the peer was asked why his family did not write a diary.

Students referred to films such as *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* and *Schindler's List*. The guest teachers worked with clips from the film versions of the well-known Dutch juvenile novel *Oorlogswinter* and *La Vita è Bella*. *Indigènes*, a film about North-African soldiers in World War II, was once shown in full, and received full attention precisely from the boys who had misbehaved in class before. Generally, we were struck by the fact that confusion among students about fiction and non-fiction is common. In a filmed portrait of a survivor the question was put emphatically whether the photo of the child and the older lady were of the same person. Did *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* really happen? A student said, "I once saw images from inside the gas chamber."²⁶

The mbo class "care and well-being" is a class full of girls and only one boy, who all participate actively in the lesson. Here, you hear no insulting remarks, only interest and, near the end of the lesson, boredom. Mostly, the stories about the Holocaust, for instance the family history of the peer, and video clips, make an impression. Prior to his story, the peer has the chairs put in a circle in order to create, as it were, a completely new speech event. Afterwards, the students react with sighs about how bad things are or how evil man can be.

Another Big Narrative, Told by the Students Themselves

"Next week we will discuss collaboration." A student shouts: "The Illuminati?" "No, that is something quite different," the peer responds. In the break, the student explains that he has learned about the Illuminati through a website and a fellow student. "It is actually a book. But I have not read it." It is about a group of people who pursue "one blood line", "one race" through history, they want power, it is "very bad", they are "undercover" and it goes "very deep". He folds his hands with his thumbs and indexes together. They have their own signs. In another class, a student tells that the Illuminati have caused World War II. "They control the world. They keep us under a diabolical spell through films and music", and "Hitler wrote two books, *Mein Kampf* and *The New World Order*." A final example: the peer shows a photograph of Camp David and asks: "What do we see here?" A student answers: "Illuminati." Peer: "No, peace talks."

Even before the school visits, we were familiar with the fascination for the "Illuminati" existing among some young people, and the idea of a "cult" with its own secret signs and symbols. Among these are the multinationals with their "one-eye symbols" (google for instance the Endemol logo) that have the world in their grip. The

²⁶ We think the juxtaposition of material from fiction and non-fiction should be subject to further discussion.

unmasking of 9/11 as an American or Jewish act also fits in with this conspiracy theory. The ideas touch on stereotypes about Jewish conspiracy and control over the media. There is no space here to discuss the scope of these notions but the references of students do not originate from the books by Dan Brown or J.K. Rowling. Students from different classes referred to the Illuminati about whom they told each other outside of the lessons. In class, the peers did not engage in this “alternative narrative”, as can be gleaned from casual remarks. In general, it seems that teachers and peers do not seem to be aware that this story is circulating among students. References to dark conspiracy theories and so-called facts further complicate the teacher’s task to interpret the utterances of students as either assertions or provocations.

In a discussion on the UN Partition Plan of 1947, the peer asks whether it would not have been better for the Arabs to accept the plan. “Yes”, a student says. “That would have been better”. She is silent for a moment and then asks: “Could it be that the Jews had bribed the United Nations?” The peer: “Eh, I think that would be difficult, but in theory, yes.” It is a pity that no attention was paid to the idea behind this, that the Jews can direct the world through their money.

The Narrative on Which the Conversation Sometimes Stalls

The *Diversion* teaching package contains three lessons on the Middle East conflict and explicitly explains the relation between colonialism, world wars, the Holocaust and the foundation of Israel. The knowledge of World War II among students appeared to us larger than that of the Middle East conflict. Possibly, the students did not entirely speak their mind. That is to say that they were not willing to make pronouncements that might be subject to discussion. Silence was perhaps meaningful here. This is interesting because the *raison d’être* of the teaching package was the idea that students feel the need to discuss the Middle East conflict. In class, the peer asks the opinion of the students about the coming of the Jews to Palestine. Did they have the right? Can it be approved? No one reacts. It seems the peers had expected strong opinions, while the students know nothing, are not interested or have no intention of speaking out. Once, a girl in the back says softly to her neighbour: “Look what they are doing in Gaza”. The peer does not notice this.

The teaching package stresses the perspective of right against right as the heritage of the faulty British decolonisation. Students mostly could go along with that. The issue of the division divides. The peer says: there is “so much Arabian land, the Palestinians could also go and live there”. A student reacts: “That is the same as sending the Dutch to Belgium.” Here, we have the beginning of a serious conversation as to the contents, with statements referring to the collective identities of the student and the peer. Sometimes, Israel is marked as the wrongdoer. Mostly, and this is a pity for us, such sentiments are nipped in the bud. A teacher asks whether students know present-day examples of discrimination and exclusion. No one says anything. “Come on. There are so many examples.” She herself names gays in Iran.

A student mentions Israel. Immediately, the Jewish peer interrupts. “Well, Israel is one of the few countries that has a democracy.” The Muslim peer reacts: “Come on, democracy, there is room for discussion there.” The two wisely decide to suspend their disagreement. Again, the student is not asked for further explanation.

Sometimes, a conversation develops. Here is a rare example where the students, expressly directed by the curriculum, involve their Muslim identity.

What would be a solution to the conflict?

Student: “I would give land to Muslims.”

Peer: “But what would you do with the Jews?”

Two students answer: “I would expel the Jews.”

Another student answers: “I would have them live together, have Jews and Muslims form a government together.”

Yet another says: “I would build more mosques than synagogues. I am a Muslim so I care more about Muslims.”

In Conclusion: How to Do Things with Words

In the first decade of the twenty-first century the debate on Holocaust education became gradually entangled in the integration debate.²⁷ In a highly influential newspaper article on “The Multicultural Drama” in 2000, sociologist Paul Scheffer devoted a major portion to the teaching of history to children of immigrants. Scheffer denounced the allegedly customary statement, “Why would you bother Turkish children with the war?”, as “a stupid attempt” to deny children already lagging behind in education to partake in the collective memory of the country they live in (Scheffer 2000, 2011). The article by Scheffer made a causal connection between the problems of integration of (in particular Muslim) immigrants and the ideology of multiculturalism. In the succeeding years the debate on the history core curriculum moved even more in the direction of this by now familiar debate on education, integration and the politics of identity. The events in the years 2003–2004 demonstrate how different actors in the field were trying to find their way in this emotionally intense debate, by looking for innovative ways of teaching and talking about the Holocaust. It might be useful then to map actual ways of talking among students in class. That is what we have tried to do in this contribution.

World War II and the persecution of the Jews are alive in the classroom, even though the reactions are not always politically correct. The students know the central names and concepts, partly because these have been dealt with in primary education. There appears to be less enthusiasm for the discussion of the Middle East conflict. Regularly, largely

²⁷ Hondius (2011b) charts the history of (the debate on) Holocaust education since the end of World War II.

unarticulated and casual anti-Jewish remarks are made. They indicate a more lasting attitude and the existence of an alternative “narrative” about the role of the Jews in history and their position in present-day society, and about the genesis and development of the Middle East conflict. These two alternative narratives influence perceptions of the Holocaust and of Jews as victims of the largest genocide in modern history. Furthermore, it is striking that the stigmatisation and exclusion constituting the run-up to the mass murder is sometimes translated to the twenty-first-century position of minorities in the Netherlands. This echoes a more general public debate in the Netherlands. Also striking is the fixed repertoire of slogans, songs and associations which are employed in a provocative way. Regarding these conclusions, it is important to consider that Amsterdam may not be representative of the rest of the Netherlands. Or, as a surprised teacher from the south of the Netherlands remarked during a session: “At our school, hearts are carved in lavatory doors, and not swastikas”.

Further analysis of class interactions in the light of the insights about speech acts and speech events is desirable. This seems more productive than the surveys which offer insufficient insight in the students’ outlook and which do not consider the class dynamics on which teachers have been reporting for more than 10 years. In that light, speech codes might be considered, in order to avoid have speech in the class room. Through concepts derived from the work by Searle and Austin (in his seminal work with the apt title *How to Do Things with Words*) we have tried to give an impulse to an interpretation of the practice of speech: “[I]n order to explain what can go wrong with statements we cannot just concentrate on the proposition involved (whatever that is) as has been done traditionally. We must consider the total situation in which the utterance is issued – the total speech act” (Austin 2004, 52). This also goes for a delicate subject such as the willingness of student (particularly those in preparatory middle-level applied education with an either Moroccan-Dutch or Muslim background) to participate in Holocaust education. In the discussed teachers’ workshops, some controversial utterances were central. The analysis of these constituted a first step in enhancing our understanding of the problems teachers have to deal with. The subsequent observations in the classroom show what “provocation” and “rejection” come down to in practice: students are making sincere, declarative utterances without too much actual knowledge, but they also, and sometimes simultaneously, use insinuations, sarcasm and types of non-verbal communication. It does not make the question about what is actually said in the classroom any easier.²⁸

References

- Austin, John L. 2004. *How to do things with words. The William James lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Boersema, Jacob. 2004. *Feiten en Voelen: De Holocaust in het geschiedenisonderwijs*. Amsterdam: Anne Frank House.

²⁸ On the equivocality of speech acts see Butler (1997a, b).

- Brinkman, Fenny. 2005. *Haram. Uit het dagelijks leven op een islamitische school*. Amsterdam: Balans.
- Butler, Judith. 1997a. Sovereign performatives in the contemporary scene of utterance. *Critical Inquiry* 23(2 (Winter)): 350–377.
- Butler, Judith. 1997b. *Excitable speech: A politics of performative*. New York: Routledge.
- Carnegie, Charles V. 1996. The Dundus and the Nation. *Cultural Anthropology* 11(4): 470–509.
- Cohen, Stanley. 2002. *Folk devils and moral panics*, 3rd ed. New York: Routledge.
- Ensel, Remco. 1999. *Saints and servants in southern Morocco*. Leiden, Köln: Brill.
- Heuvel, Eric. 2003. *De Ontdekking*. Amsterdam: Anne Frank House and Resistance Museum Friesland.
- Hondius, Hondius. 2010. De Franse militaire begraafplaats in Kapelle. In *Een open zenuw. Hoe wij ons de Tweede Wereldoorlog herinneren*, ed. Madelon de Keizer and Marije Plomp, 179–188. Amsterdam: Bert Bakker.
- Hondius, Dienne. 2011a. Meer kennis, minder drama. *De Groene Amsterdammer*, April 28.
- Hondius, Dienne. 2011b. *Oorlogslessen. Onderwijs over de oorlog sinds 1945*. Amsterdam: Bert Bakker.
- Jikeli, Günther. 2010. Antisemitism in youth languages: The pejorative use of the terms for ‘Jew’ in German and French today. *Conflict and Communication Online* 9(1): 1–13.
- Kieskamp, Wilma. 2006. Speeddebat over het snel groeiende antisemitisme in Nederland. *Trouw*, June 29.
- Kleijwegt, Margalith. 2005. *Onzichtbare ouders. De buurt van Mohammed B*. Zutphen: Uitgeverij Plataan.
- Kuipers, Giseline. 2006. *Good humor, bad taste. A sociology of the joke*. Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter.
- Macgilchrist, Felicitas, and Barbara Christophe. 2011. Translating globalization theories into educational research: Thoughts on recent shifts in Holocaust education. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 32(1 (February)): 145–158.
- Noorda, Jaap, Manon Danker, and Henny Reubsæet. 2004. *Heden en verleden verbinden. Onderzoek naar jeugdvoorlichting over WO II in relatie tot het heden*. Instituut Jeugd en Welzijn. Report by order of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, Free University, Amsterdam.
- Ribbens, Kees, Joep Schenk, and Martijn Eickhoff. 2008. *Oorlog op vijf continenten. Nieuwe Nederlanders & de geschiedenissen van de Tweede Wereldoorlog*. Amsterdam: Boom.
- Scheffer, Paul. 2000. Het multiculturele drama. *NRC Handelsblad*, January 29.
- Scheffer, Paul. 2011. *Immigrant nations*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Schulman, Sam. 2011a. Holocaust hegemony and its moral pitfalls. *The Weekly Standard*, January 3.
- Schulman, Sam. 2011b. De hegemonie van de Holocaust. *De Groene Amsterdammer*, April 28.
- Searle, John R. 1969. *Speech acts. An essay in the philosophy of language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Searle, John R. 1975. Indirect speech acts. *Syntax and Semantics* 3: 59–82.
- Stiphout, Robert and Ruud Deijkers. 2010. W.O. 2.0. *Elsevier*, April 27.
- Stranders, Jaïr. 2010. Medeleven kan dam opwerpen. *De Volkskrant*, June 28.
- Stromberg, Peter. 1993. *Language and self-transformation. A study of the Christian conversion narrative*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Trachtenberg, Susan. 1979. Joke-telling as a tool in ESL. *TESOL Quarterly* 13(1): 89–99.
- van Ginkel, Rob. 2011. *Rondom de stilte. Herdenkingscultuur in Nederland*. Amsterdam: Bert Bakker.
- Vermeulen, Karien and Kai Pattipilohy. 2010. Moslimleerling sluit zich af voor de Holocaust. *De Volkskrant*, May 8.

Challenges and Opportunities of Educational Concepts Concerning National Socialist Crimes in German Immigration Society

Mehmet Can, Karoline Georg, and Ruth Hatlapa

The question as to how to teach about the crimes of the National Socialists has been debated among educators for decades. There is the danger of overwhelming and alienating the youths from the topic by exercising moral pressure when discussing the Shoah,¹ in an attempt to evoke an emotional reaction in the students. There is the problem of how to approach the fact that there is increasing generational distance to National Socialism which presumably results in the Shoah being perceived as simply one brutal period of history among many. Eventually, the question of how to teach and learn about National Socialism was also broached in the German immigration society, wherein not one, but a multitude of historical and political narratives exist. This question concerns the Shoah in particular – a crime executed by the German society that constitutes an essential part of the national history and the national politics of remembrance.

¹ In our article, we use the term *Shoah* to represent the elimination of the European Jews during the period of National Socialism. This Hebrew term translates into English as “catastrophe”, though it loses its specificity when translated. This is a deliberate demarcation from the term “Holocaust” that has become the dominant appellation, because the latter is problematic in two aspects. The term “Holocaust” has a Greek origin and has been used to name animal sacrifices. In the English translation of the Lutheran Bible it signifies “burn victim”. Furthermore, the term lacks historical clarity, because other events – as for example the dropping of the nuclear bomb on Japan – have also been labelled “Holocaust”. On the history of the term see Zastrow 2005.

M. Can (✉) • K. Georg • R. Hatlapa
e-mail: mehmet.can@kiga-berlin.org; karoline.georg@kiga-berlin.org;
ruth.hatlapa@kiga-berlin.org

As there are only a few studies about the perception of the Shoah among youths with a migrant background in Germany,² we deduce the following theoretical assumptions from our observations and experiences. Therefore, the following analysis is mainly based on the empirical practice in our daily work with the Kreuzberg Initiative against Antisemitism. Most of the incidences we describe represent situations which frequently occur during our workshops, although not every time. From our observations, we present a variety of examples of attitudes among migrant youths toward the Shoah; nevertheless, these do not constitute a representative survey. In addition, we include published first-hand reports of other educators working in the same field in order to broaden the perspective.

Over the past years, the Kreuzberg Initiative against Antisemitism has been deeply engaged in the discussion around education and the question regarding the ability of the current system to meet contemporary educational requirements. In our article, we primarily want to present our theses on the challenges and opportunities of *Teaching about the Shoah*³ in the immigration society. Furthermore, we will lay out our educational unit *Jewish Life in Kreuzberg*, which is designed as an explicitly inclusive approach.

Kreuzberg Initiative Against Antisemitism (KIgA)

The Kreuzberg Initiative against Antisemitism is an educational, non-governmental organisation aimed at countering antisemitism among young people in Germany. It was founded in 2003 by a small circle of educators and journalists from Kreuzberg – a district in Berlin where many Muslims with a Turkish or Arab background live. The incidences which initiated the foundation of the KIgA were the antisemitic terror attacks against synagogues in Istanbul. It was, however, furthermore a reaction towards a notable rise in antisemitism in Berlin that could also be observed within parts of the Muslim population. The variety of current manifestations of antisemitism are demonstrated in the following examples, which we either experienced in workshops between 2006 and 2009 or which took place in Berlin and therefore affect our work environment:

- *Graffiti in a youth club in Kreuzberg included messages of hatred against Israel such as “Death to Israel” accompanied by “Freedom for Palestine”. The social worker of this particular youth club perceived this as a legitimate left-wing position.*

² One of the studies is the outstanding analysis by Viola Georgi: “Entliehene Erinnerung: Geschichtsbilder junger Migranten in Deutschland” (Georgi 2003).

³ In our opinion, it is important to differentiate between educational concepts concerning the Shoah and forms of education concerning human rights or other National Socialist crimes, all of which seem to carry the label “Holocaust Education”, even if there is no explicit reference to the Shoah (Sigel n.d.) We therefore prefer to write about *Teaching and Learning about the Shoah*.

- *During a student's presentation on the Shoah, another student with migrant background cheerfully applauded, which was ignored by the teacher.*
- *During one of our workshops on "conspiracy theories" a very motivated student of German background claimed to know that the Jews did not go to work in the World Trade Center on 9/11.*
- *In November 2006, during the Lebanon War, a 14-year-old student had to transfer from her school to a Jewish school because she was continuously harassed and attacked by her fellow students with Arab background (Boie and Hasselmann 2006).*
- *In March 2007, an arson attack at a Jewish kindergarten in Berlin-Charlottenburg was committed. The perpetrators painted swastikas and the slogans "Auschwitz" and "Scheiß Juden" [fucking Jews] on the building (Lier and Nibbrig 2007).*
- *During the latest Israeli military intervention in Gaza, there was a call for a boycott of the grocery stores Aldi and Lidl in Berlin via text messages, email and the internet platform "youtube"⁴, because they were accused of donating their day's revenue to the Israeli army.*

All these incidences demonstrate different forms of antisemitism that have been virulent in recent years. It is worth mentioning that some of the perpetrators are of German origin while others have a Muslim background. Thus, common manifestations mainly consist of anti-Zionist antisemitism, Islamist antisemitism, conspiracy theories and the approval of the Shoah⁵. When KIGa started its work, there were no educational concepts dealing with these current forms of antisemitism. In Germany, education on antisemitism was devised in a national-centred, historical manner and mainly concentrated on the Shoah. Accordingly, the KIGa – today joined by other educational organisations – developed workshops that aim to directly address these varied manifestations of antisemitism and to incorporate the fact that they are found among German youths as well as youths with a migrant background. The KIGa has developed different educational units focusing on the Middle East conflict and has organised educational German-Israeli exchanges. Furthermore, we have designed educational material addressing conspiracy theories, Islamist antisemitism and the relation of antisemitism to certain perceptions of the economy.

Since much of our work is directed against present forms of antisemitism, many of our educational concepts do not focus on the Shoah. We believe that *Learning about the Shoah* cannot immunise against antisemitism, though it can raise consciousness towards the danger of antisemitism and other forms of prejudiced world

⁴ Two examples can be found at: helloemree. 2009. "israel wird unterstützt von aldi." *YouTube*. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sFryv877uQg&feature=related> (accessed October 5, 2010) and pardonn1. 2009. "Aldi und Lidl spenden für Israel Muslima zum Boykot." *YouTube*. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qClrXsoNGYE&feature=related> (Accessed October 5, 2010).

⁵ Approval of the Shoah can be part of so-called secondary antisemitism, a primarily Western German phenomenon. This latent form of antisemitism arises from the feeling of shame and the denial of guilt in regards to National Socialist crimes. It is characterised by the wish to leave the past behind and often accuses "the Jews" of having benefited economically from the compensations Germany had to remit (Benz 2004).

views (Wetzel 2006). However, the Shoah is an omnipresent theme within German society and, in our work, we are concerned with the question of how the subject of the Shoah can be approached in an immigrant society.

It is from this perspective that we want to discuss the challenges of educational concepts concerning the Shoah in Germany for students of various backgrounds, including Muslim.

The Relevance of the Shoah in the German Self-Conception

The remembrance of the National Socialists' crimes and their after-effects for the post National Socialist society are still essential for the self-conception of the Federal Republic: "In Germany, it is beyond question that National Socialism and its remembrance are constitutive for the German historical consciousness. The remembrance of the victims of National Socialist crimes, and the preoccupation with the Wirkungsgeschichte [history of effects] of the Holocaust constitute the main reference point of the political-historical self-conception"⁶ (Georgi 2009, 92). Numerous public debates over the last decades – as for example the discussion regarding the "Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe" in Berlin – demonstrate the centrality of this historical period in the German public sphere. However, Astrid Messerschmidt pointed out that the discussions about the remembrance of the Shoah in Germany are very ambivalent. On the one hand, there is the desire to dispose of the memory of the crimes, on the other hand, ever since the 1990s there seems to be some sort of pride in the work which has been achieved in terms of remembrance, as if this were a "trademark of German political culture" (Messerschmidt 2009, 184).

The themes revolve around understanding the Shoah, the guilt and the shame, the involvement of politicians or other prominent persons, the role of family members and future responsibilities. The imperative that "Auschwitz" never happen again (Adorno 1971) has led to a vivid educational debate on the question of how to "learn from" the Shoah, with the aim that future generations will be immunised against National Socialist ideology or other attitudes hostile towards humanity (Brockhaus 2008). The demands to take responsibility and to "learn from" history are a part of the traditional educational concepts – especially in schools. Based on the idea of a German "community of destiny, responsibility and accountability" (Meseth 2002, 126), this educational requirement is directed exclusively at the descendants of National Socialist perpetrators. The Shoah thus becomes a concern only for those who belong to the German collective by origin. Furthermore, the construction of a German "community of destiny" serves as a normative element in the continuity of a national identity based on ancestry.

⁶ All citations are translated by Ruth Hatlapa.

Germany as a Migration Society

Even though Germany never had an ethnoculturally homogeneous population, as is widely believed (Motte and Ohlinger 2004), the variety of migration processes and the importance of persons with a migrant background within the German society is a subject which has been discussed more prevalently over the last decades. However, until today, persons with a non-German origin remain more or less invisible in the “collective memory and in the historical-cultural configuration of the public space” (ibid, 21). The dogma that “Germany is not an immigration country”⁷ which still exists for some German politicians – such as the Bavarian prime minister Horst Seehofer – is easily disproved: German society exhibits an ethnic, cultural and religious diversity similar to other migration societies in Europe. In 2009, 16 million people (almost 20% of the German population) had a migrant background (Statistisches Bundesamt 2010). “Person with a migrant background” is defined as “anyone who immigrated to the Federal Republic of Germany after 1949 as well as any foreigner born in Germany and anyone born in Germany as German with at least one parent who immigrated or was born as a foreigner in Germany” (ibid, 6). It has to be pointed out, though, that the public use of the term “person with a migrant background” is usually not employed according to this definition, but has a profoundly political content. Children with French or English parents are less likely to be called “person with a migrant background” as are people with a Turkish background, regardless of how many generations of their family have lived in Germany. In fact, the common usage of the term reflects the hegemonic perception within the German mainstream concerning who is considered “foreign”: Within the political debates about migration and integration policies, this term mainly refers to persons with a socially and educationally deprived background that live in poor areas, mainly in West German cities. The reference applies mostly to Turkish, Arab or Black Germans, or other persons who differ in their appearance from the stereotypically imagined “German” phenotype.⁸

Aside from the controversial terminology, there can be no doubt that we live in a society that has been shaped substantially by migration processes, in which numerous historical and present-day narratives are relevant. Many people in Germany have individual, familial and collective histories which differ strongly from the traditional German narrative and whose national historical knowledge is not represented within the national discourse on history (Meseth 2002). “Migration confronts democratic societies with their own regimes of affiliation. It questions these regimes and brings forth new forms of affiliation” (Messerschmidt 2009, 97). The approach to history

⁷ As Horst Seehofer stated during the latest integration debate in Germany in autumn 2010 (Spiegel online 2010).

⁸ The debate on the concept of “migrant background” can be paralleled with the criticism of the term “foreigner” or “hatred of foreigners” within the theoretical discussions of racism, stating that not all “actual foreigners” are subjected to hatred while many Germans (as for example Black Germans) are (Räthzel and Kalpaka 2000).

and historical remembrance is an essential factor in the permanent negotiation of participation, positioning and identity in the migrant society.

As a result of the West German labour migration policy from the 1960s to the 1980s, the majority of the migrant population has a Turkish background. However, the society in Germany is far too complex and diverse to be uniquely described in ethnic or religious categories. Even though we focus in our analysis on youths with a Turkish or Arab background who are likely to be socialised within a Muslim context, we need to clarify that the description of “youths with a Muslim background” is a reduction of complexity for educational purposes. It cannot reflect the diversity of Muslim life realities. If somebody has a Muslim-Turkish background with a history of labour migration and another a Muslim-Lebanese background with a family who was forced to flee their homeland, this generates very different experiences and narratives that influence their perception of society and history.

The formation of attitudes – as in, for example, towards the Shoah – is influenced by a variety of factors of which none predetermine a particular point of view, yet all have to be taken into consideration when creating educational designs to address these attitudes. In addition to religious and ethnic backgrounds, other aspects, such as family contexts, are also relevant for the formation of attitudes towards German historiography. It is also possible that social stratification, in terms of income and education, might actually be the pivotal factor. It is necessary to keep this diversity in mind when talking about the barriers or opportunities of youths with a Muslim background and their perceptions of the Shoah.

Mechanisms of Exclusion and Marginalisation

As already argued above, the German approach to teaching the history of the Shoah in Germany is related to a collective identity based on the idea of ancestry. How this individually affects students with a migrant background is vividly demonstrated in the following example:

At a symposium, Juliane Hogrefe reported on an educational unit on National Socialism at a school that she had analysed in a study. The teacher introduced the subject in the first part of her lesson with two basic questions. First, she asked the students the morally connoted question of whether they themselves felt affected by the history of National Socialism. Secondly, she asked if their families were affected “in one way or another”. In the course of the lesson, the teacher directly addressed one of the students in regard to her Turkish migrant background and assumed that she had no familial ties to National Socialism. The approached student confirmed the assumption at first, but immediately went on to say that she knew about what had happened and that she also had neighbours who were affected by the war. The teacher did not comment on the student’s statement, but instead asked a student with a German background about the history of his family (Hogrefe 2009).

It is obvious how the teacher dissociated the student with the Turkish background from the German “Schicksalsgemeinschaft” [community of destiny] – and therefore

in a certain way also from the content of the lesson. The student accepted the role at first by confirming that the subject is not very important in her family. However, she then tried to integrate herself into the class with further explication. This kind of situation results in a variety of problems regarding teaching about the Shoah in a migrant society, because students with a non-German background and no familial ties to the National Socialism period are excluded from this central reference point of German identity (Georgi 2009). “Processes of education within immigration societies must come to terms with the question of how othering and alienation comes into being and how this affects minorities and majorities within the society” (Messerschmidt 2009, 98). Furthermore, as a consequence of the heterogeneity of the students in the schools, unexpected references to the history of the Second World War will be much more likely (Kößler 2000). If this is not acknowledged by the educator, the effects are strongly marginalising and can be a form of discrimination of persons with non-German origin.

In addition to this general form of exclusion, there are also other mechanisms that influence the perception of the Shoah among people with a migrant background:

1. As we learned during our work in schools, many teachers assess an observed “lack of interest” in learning about the Shoah as a particular problem of students with a migrant background. There definitely can be a lack of interest that basically corresponds to the lack of interest of youths with a German background. This is usually accompanied by the attitude towards the Shoah that it happened a long time ago, that they have nothing to do with it and that they wonder why they have to bother with the topic – especially considering the strongly emotionalised and moralised atmosphere revolving around the subject.
2. These teachers’ attitudes, the presumption of a lack of interest in or connection to the topic “Shoah”, frequently result in a self-fulfilling prophecy. By not addressing the students because they have no German grandparents, they avert the opportunity for the students to express their opinion and their experiences concerning the subject matter. The students are therefore not only excluded but also depreciated, which doubles the effect of marginalisation.
3. Furthermore, Monique Eckmann pointed out the dimension of social discrimination accompanied by the nation-centred approach to the Shoah in Germany. If a person with a migrant background in Germany has little or no knowledge about the period of National Socialism, he or she cannot understand the German political culture and even less participate in it. The discussions about the past can result in forms of additive exclusion (Eckmann 2007). Moreover, he or she is not only unable to participate; persons with a migrant background are discouraged from identifying with the German history: “Affiliation is mediated through historical remembrance” (Georgi 2009, 95). As a consequence, youths with a migrant background often revert to a “Muslim”, “Arab” or “Turkish” identity.

Even though youths with a Muslim background experience these mechanisms of exclusion, they find different ways of appropriating the topic for themselves.

Accessibility of the Shoah for Youths with Muslim Background: Universalistic Perspectives, Participation in the German Identity and Identification

In our workshops, we did not observe that students with a Muslim background are less interested or less motivated than students with a German background. Educational concepts that approach the topic of the Shoah from a different perspective can show different results than the traditional forms (Gryglewski 2009). There is a variety of strategies of appropriation of the history and remembrance of the Shoah that we or other educators (for example those of the “House of the Wannsee Conference – Memorial and Educational Site”) encountered while working with Muslim youths. Some are similar to those of youths of German origin while others emphasise different themes. In her research on the perception of history among young migrants in Germany, Georgi categorised the youths into four “types” with different focuses on the Shoah (Georgi 2003), most of which are corroborated by our experiences, though we have observed additional approaches.

What can be found as a form of access to the history of the Shoah is a rather universal approach to the topic that is motivated by an interest in a general preservation of human rights. It incorporates the perspective that no single person or group should suffer disfranchisement, be subjected to humiliation and violence or face the threat of elimination. This approach is not particularly connected to a migrant identity, but rather can be found among all groups. In our workshops, the students often show empathy with the Jews and are appalled by the National Socialists’ crimes.⁹

A different form of access to the Shoah for youths with a non-German background can be the employment of the topic as a means of integration into the German mainstream society. The youths recognise the importance of the Shoah and its remembrance in Germany. They perceive that engagement in and the appropriation of the subject, which also involves embracing what Améry has called the “negative heritage” (Meseth 2002), is an opportunity to participate in German culture and a chance to become an accepted member. This demonstrates how strongly the debate around National Socialism is perceived as a means of positioning oneself within the hegemonic society. Viola Georgi describes the case of the student Bülent who went to the Terezin Memorial and felt “really German”, accompanied by feelings of guilt, because the Czech population that met him did not differentiate between him and his classmates: all of them were considered Germans, a perception that Bülent rarely experienced in Germany.¹⁰ Astrid Messerschmidt describes the opportunity of youths with a migrant background to establish a form of “critical affiliation”, in which they adopt the German past through critical assessment (Messerschmidt 2010, 28).

⁹ This form of reference to the Shoah is in accordance with Georgi’s “Type IV”. Focus: Humanity (Georgi 2003, 305).

¹⁰ Type II. Focus: Observers, Followers and Perpetrators during National Socialism (Georgi 2003, 303).

Furthermore, another approach to the Shoah can be found wherein youths with a migrant background see themselves as the new or future victims. When the topic of National Socialism is addressed, a particular interest for the Jewish victims becomes obvious. In our workshops on the history of the persecution of the Jews – in the Middle Ages, in the time of the German Empire or during National Socialism – some students compare their own situation as a religious minority in Germany with the situation of the Jews who suffered discrimination in Germany's past. They relate to them in the fear of being subjected to the violence from right wing extremists or being discriminated against by the German bureaucracy or the police. Viola Georgi describes a case where a Muslim girl voiced her fear that the Shoah might happen again with the Muslims as the victim group.¹¹ If the “German-Jewish symbiosis” failed, why should the “German-Muslim symbiosis” succeed? Thus, discussions of the history of National Socialism are used to negotiate one's individual status as being a part of a religious or ethnic minority.

The inclusion of the perspective of youths with a migrant background allows for a wider understanding of the social relevance and the effects of dealing with the Shoah, and furthermore broadens our views of educational concepts which would be useful in approaching this topic. We agree with Astrid Messerschmidt that students with a migrant background should not be considered a “problem” of education, but rather an enrichment, because their opinions and their experiences add complexity to the themes of our work (Messerschmidt 2009). These three modes of accessibility to the history of the Shoah presented above are not per se without problematic characteristics, yet they share an empathetic relation to the victims of the National Socialists. There are also perceptions of the Shoah that foster a resistance to this kind of empathy and which become even more challenging when they are expressions of antisemitic stereotypes.

The Phenomena “Competition of Victimhood” and Approval of National Socialist Crimes as Non-Empathetic References to the Shoah

There are various forms of reference to the Shoah among youths with a migrant background that are rather distanced or aggressive towards the victims of the Shoah. Students who take such views show little willingness and interest to learn about National Socialist crimes and reject discussions about the issue.

In our work with Muslim youths, we frequently observe a phenomenon which Monique Eckmann, among others, has labelled “competition of victimhood” (Eckmann 2007, 102). In our workshop “Jewish Life in Kreuzberg” we sometimes encountered students who did not want to talk about the Jewish suffering, because

¹¹ Type I. Focus: Victims of National Socialism (Georgi 2003, 283, 301).

according to them it is always about the Jews, while no one cares about their suffering. The surveillance of German synagogues and Jewish institutions by police is sometimes mentioned, allegedly as evidence of the preferential treatment of the Jews, while mosques remain unprotected even after attacks. The focus on the persecution of the Jews is considered tantamount to a refusal to acknowledge the discrimination of Muslims. Moreover, Arab students in particular repeatedly raise the topic of the Middle East conflict in lessons about the Shoah. Problematic analogies are often made, as for example, the comparison of Israel to Nazi Germany, in which the Palestinians are constructed as the victims of a “new Holocaust” executed by the Israelis – this reversal of victim and perpetrator is an antisemitic fragment.

Competition of victimhood is not only observable in relation to direct discrimination but also in terms of remembrance and the acknowledgement of narratives (Eckmann 2007). The perceived lack of acceptance by and integration into the hegemonic German society results in a resistance against the preoccupation with the Shoah. According to Georgi, this competition of victimhood and the instrumentalisation of the Shoah in order to heighten the visibility of one’s own discrimination is a result of a strong involvement or identification with one’s own ethnic group and its “collective history”. She claims that this demonstrates a profound understanding of the German discourse on dealing with the past.¹²

Moreover, in some workshops we experienced that youths expressed their approval of National Socialists’ crimes. One student with a migrant background cheered when we talked about the persecution of the Jews. On a different occasion, another one said he regretted that Hitler did not finish the job. These alarming comments can be motivated by a variety of factors. We experience quite frequently that we are being tested by the students in our workshops. The students know that the topic of the Shoah is a sensitive issue and use it to provoke us or their teachers, maybe as part of a simple power play or maybe because they feel unheard as far as their own narratives are concerned. However, they can indeed be motivated by an antisemitic world view or by fragments of antisemitism. Without doubt, antisemitic stereotypes are common among youths of all backgrounds, including German youths. To develop educational concepts to counter these patterns of thought is at the centre of our work.

There are individual cases where we were confronted with such a density of antisemitic fragments that it was not possible to approach the topic of the Shoah at all. In addition, we observed the perception that the Jews allegedly caused the Shoah in order to establish the state of Israel, as well as the denial of the Shoah altogether. These are blatant antisemitic comments, and difficult to handle for educators.¹³

The references to the Shoah discussed above – the human rights perspective, participation and identity, analogies, competition of victimhood – can be used as a

¹² Type III. Focus: one’s own ethnic group (Georgi 2003, 305).

¹³ In their study about the preconditions for education against antisemitism in Germany, Albert Scherr and Barbara Schaeuble suggest that youths with an antisemitic world-view, based on radical right, islamist or nationalist conviction, need educational concepts that target not only antisemitic elements but the ideology as a whole (Schäuble and Scherr 2007).

framework in order to bring up the issue of one's own discrimination. While we do not assume that any ethnic identity demonstrates one specific attitude, as Georgi's Type III (focus: one's own ethnic group) might imply, we do believe that the act of referencing the Shoah is used to voice one's own experiences of discrimination, which is often connected to belonging to an ethnic group (Müller 2008). Moreover, being subjected to discrimination because of a Muslim background might lead to more strongly embracing a very problematic Muslim collective identity which is based on hostility towards the "Western world" (and especially Israel) as the alleged aggressor against the "Islamic world". The request for an acknowledgement of the discrimination against people with migrant backgrounds within German society must be taken seriously, although clear boundaries also have to be set: The expression of one's own suffering cannot legitimise hatred against others, as, for example, in the form of antisemitism. Those who experience discrimination can also be aggressors against others.

Educational Unit: Jewish Life in Kreuzberg

In general, the Kreuzberg Initiative against Antisemitism aims to develop educational material on antisemitism that creates multiple paths of access and thereby addresses the whole society in its diversity. Our methods are not designed exclusively for youths with a Muslim background – even though a high percentage of the students we work with identify as Muslims – but rather, our concepts are directed at the whole society with the specific inclusion of perspectives that are not "traditionally German". Among other aspects, when we conceptualise and conduct our workshops we try to acknowledge the migrant society by working in teams which represent multi-ethnic backgrounds. In our work, we have experienced that this is a very effective strategy in order to establish a connection with the students. The engagement is perceived as more legitimate by the participants and images of collective identities can be questioned.

We now want to present one of our educational projects whose goal is to establish multi-perspective access to the Shoah. In this approach, we not only identify and avoid the described mechanisms of exclusion, we also develop strategies of inclusion as a means to counter resistance towards engaging in the subject of the workshop that might result from feeling unappreciated or unheard.

The project *Jewish Life in Kreuzberg* that we will illustrate in detail was mainly realised in 2007 and 2008. During the project, an exhibition was developed as well as an educational unit. The project was designed for students of "*Hauptschulen*" between 15 and 18 years old. These schools have demonstrated one of the lowest educational levels in Berlin and were fortunately abolished in 2010. Our objective was to develop a programme for educationally deprived students, because the existing extracurricular historical-political education was mainly offered to students in higher education.

As we described above, the main mechanisms of exclusion are based on the fact that many educational concepts concerning learning about the Shoah address a German identity. As we realised during our daily work, students with a Turkish or Arab background might not identify themselves as German, but they certainly feel “Kreuzbergian”. We included the students’ identification with their neighbourhood, expecting that learning about the history of their district – a familiar environment – would be more interesting and comprehensible for them. Furthermore, we chose a biographical approach, as this method is often used in teaching about the Shoah. Thus, the students experience a more personal way to deal with the history and the fate of Jews.

Targeting educationally deprived students, we decided both to write easily understandable texts and to employ a variety of methods, thereby taking into consideration the lack of concentration with which we are often confronted.

With the four and a half hour long workshop, *Jewish Life in Kreuzberg*, we address various historical aspects of Kreuzberg. In the first part, the students get an idea about the historical period we are dealing with: We compare old and new photographs of certain locations in Kreuzberg and discuss how the district has changed or not, using a memory game. With a second method we “go back from now into history” by asking the students about their parents’ and grandparents’ dates of birth. The students learn that during the time of National Socialism their grandparents were children. This method includes all family stories regardless of their location during that period and without any necessary reference to the Shoah. Furthermore, because of the reference and connection to their grandparents, the period between 1933 and 1945 is no longer unimaginably far away in the past.

In the next step, we want the students to comprehend the concept of a biography and how certain aspects of it can be influenced by outside forces. To understand the role of society in a person’s biography, we first let them work on their own biography. The students describe their biography and some events in their lives that affected them most. This is a method both of appreciation and acknowledgement to let the students know that their narratives are also heard. They are then asked to evaluate which of their events have been the result of their own decisions and which ones they feel were determined by others.

Having understood the basic significance of history and biographies, we then start to deal with the history of disfranchisement, exclusion and extermination of Jews during National Socialism. To demonstrate the process of radicalisation that ultimately led to the murder of almost six million Jews we discuss the anti-Jewish policies. At this point, the students are introduced to historical knowledge about the deprivation of rights for Germans considered to be Jewish. The youths empathise with the discriminated Jews. Interestingly, two particular paragraphs often catch a lot of attention: one which forbids Jews to have pets at their homes and one that forced Jews to add the middle name “Israel” for men and “Sara” for women. These laws are immediately identified as aiming at the humiliation and abasement of the Jewish population, presumably because the students can imagine the impact of these laws by referring to their own life. At this point, we usually do not experience any problematic analogies or aggressive remarks as could be expected. Apparently, this method in combination with the earlier ones allows the youths to receive the new information openly and empathetically.

This overview is followed by an intensive phase of work with the biography of a Jewish family from Kreuzberg that survived in hiding in Berlin. On the basis of simple texts, photographs and documents, we let the students learn about the story of this family – both before and after National Socialism. There are many aspects of this family’s story that are familiar to the students – either the schools the children attended or the houses in which the family lived. One female student came to know that the son of the family had hidden for 2 years in a factory that was next to the house where she lives today, and she became really excited about it. Working with this locally connected biography, the students see how vivid and close history can be. Furthermore, we can tell the students that the two children of that family are still alive. For the most part, the students show a great interest in the life of the siblings today.

Working with the family story helps us to achieve three objectives: (1) The students understand how the actions of disfranchisement and persecution of Jews in Nazi Germany, of which they learned about in general in the beginning of the workshop, affected a Jewish family in particular. (2) We let them discuss in what way the life of the family was externally or self-determined. So they can – in comparison to their own biography – understand how a system of dictatorship and persecution changes the degree of self-determination in a person’s life. (3) We want to avoid Jews only being seen as victims. Therefore we also teach about the family’s life before and after National Socialism. Thus, the students are supposed to understand that this family is just a normal family that lived in Kreuzberg many decades ago. Additionally, the story of going into hiding emphasises that Jews were not only objects of persecution but acting subjects within the possibilities of this time.

Based on our experiences with the workshop, we can state that the students – regardless of their families’ origin – are generally interested in learning about Kreuzberg’s history during National Socialism. When asked what they have learned, many students state that they did not know that Jews used to live in Kreuzberg. When asked what they liked most about the workshop, they answer that they liked to hear about the family and its history. So they could vividly learn about the impact of the crimes of National Socialism on people who could have been their neighbours.

Educational designs can integrate other perspectives and narratives in the process of imparting knowledge of the National Socialist crimes that might also have the effect of creating empathy. When teaching about history in a migrant society one has to find common references for everyone – such as the local and biographical approach.

References

- Adorno, Theodor W. 1971. Zur Bekämpfung des Antisemitismus heute (1962). In *Kritik: Kleine Schriften zur Gesellschaft*, ed. Theodor W. Adorno. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Benz, Wolfgang. 2004. *Was ist Antisemitismus?* Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung.
- Boie, Johannes, and Jörn Hasselmann. 2006. Angefeindet und bedroht. *Der Tagesspiegel Online*, November 26. <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/angefeindet-und-bedroht/779270.html>.
- Brockhaus, Gudrun. 2008. ‘Bloß nicht moralisieren!’: Emotionale Prozesse in der pädagogischen Auseinandersetzung mit dem Nationalsozialismus. *Einsichten Und Perspektiven* 01: 28–33.

- Eckmann, Monique. 2007. Vielfalt (be)achten: Unterschiedliche Bezüge und Narrative zur Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus. In *Der Umgang mit der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus: Perspektiven des Erinnerns*, ed. Landeshauptstadt München, Kulturreferat, 95–104. München: Landeshauptstadt München, Kulturreferat.
- Georgi, Viola. 2003. *Entlehene Erinnerung: Geschichtsbilder junger Migranten in Deutschland*. Hamburg: Hamburger Edition.
- Georgi, Viola. 2009. 'Ich kann mich für Dinge interessieren, für die sich deutsche Jugendliche auch interessieren': Zur Bedeutung der NS-Geschichte und des Holocaust für Jugendliche aus Einwandererfamilien. In *Crossover Geschichte: Historisches Bewusstsein Jugendlicher in der Einwanderungsgesellschaft*, ed. Viola Georgi and Rainer Ohlinger, 90–108. Hamburg: Edition Körber-Stiftung.
- Gryglewski, Elke. 2009. Diesseits und jenseits gefühlter Geschichte: Zugänge von Jugendlichen mit Migrationshintergrund zu Shoah und Nahostkonflikt. In *Crossover Geschichte: Historisches Bewusstsein Jugendlicher in der Einwanderungsgesellschaft*, ed. Viola Georgi and Rainer Ohlinger, 237–247. Hamburg: Edition Körber-Stiftung.
- Hogrefe, Juliane. 2009. Was geschieht im Geschichtsunterricht? Der Umgang mit den Paradoxien politisch-moralischer Erziehung. In *„Erziehung nach Auschwitz“ heute: Deutsche Geschichte und multikulturelle Gesellschaft [Dokumentation einer Tagung der Evangelischen Akademie Loccum vom 19. Bis 21. Mai 2008]*, ed. Susanne Benzler, 73–93. Rehburg-Loccum: Evang. Akad. Loccum.
- Köbler, Gottfried. 2000. "Perspektivenwechsel: Vorschläge für die Unterrichtspraxis zur Geschichte und Wirkung des Holocaust. In *„Erziehung nach Auschwitz“ in der multikulturellen Gesellschaft: Pädagogische und soziologische Annäherungen*, ed. Bernd Fechler, Gottfried Köbler, and Till Liebertz-Groß, 32:193–205. Veröffentlichungen der Max-Traeger-Stiftung. Weinheim: Juventa Verlag.
- Lier, Axel, and Hans H. Nibbrig. 2007. Anschlag to auf jüdischen Kindergarten. *Berliner Morgenpost*, February 26.
- Meseth, Wolfgang. 2002. 'Auschwitz' als Bildungsinhalt in der deutschen Einwanderungsgesellschaft. In *Erinnerungskulturen im Dialog: Europäische Perspektiven auf die NS-Vergangenheit*, ed. Claudia Lenz, Jens Schmidt, and Oliver von Wrochem, 125–133. Hamburg: Unrast.
- Messerschmidt, Astrid. 2009. *Weltbilder und Selbstbilder: Bildungsprozesse im Umgang mit Globalisierung, Migration und Zeitgeschichte*. Frankfurt am Main: Brandes & Apsel.
- Messerschmidt, Astrid. 2010. Kritische Zugehörigkeit als Ausdruck geschichtsbewusster Integrationsarbeit. In *Neuköllner Stadtteilmütter und ihre Auseinandersetzung mit der Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus. Ein Projekt von Aktion Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste*, ed. Aktion Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste, 25–30. Berlin: Selbstverlag.
- Motte, Jan, and Rainer Ohlinger. 2004. Einwanderung – Geschichte – Anerkennung: Auf den Spuren geteilter Erinnerungen. In *Geschichte und Gedächtnis in der Einwanderungsgesellschaft: Migration zwischen historischer Rekonstruktion und Erinnerungspolitik*, ed. Jan Motte, Rainer Ohlinger, and Landeszentrum für Zuwanderung Nordrhein-Westfalen, 17–49. Essen: Klartext.
- Müller, Jochen. 2008. Warum ist alles so ungerecht? Antisemitismus und Israelhass bei Jugendlichen: Die Rolle des Nahostkonfliktes und Optionen der pädagogischen Intervention. In *Die Juden sind Schuld: Antisemitismus in der Einwanderungsgesellschaft am Beispiel muslimisch sozialisierter Milieus. Beispiele, Erfahrungen und Handlungsoptionen aus der pädagogischen und kommunalen Arbeit*, ed. Dantsche Claudia and Amadeu-Antonio-Stiftung, 30–36. Berlin: Amadeu-Antonio-Stiftung.
- Räthzel, Nora, and Annita Kalpaka. 2000. Die Schwierigkeit, nicht rassistisch zu sein. In *Theorien über Rassismus*, ed. Räthzel Nora, 177–190. Hamburg: Argument Verlag.
- Schäuble, Barbara, and Albert Scherr. 2007. »Ich habe nichts gegen Juden, aber...« Ausgangsbedingungen und Perspektiven gesellschaftspolitischer Bildungsarbeit gegen Antisemitismus. Amadeu Antonio Stiftung. http://www.amadeu-antonio-stiftung.de/w/files/pdfs/ich_habe_nichts_2.pdf.
- Sigel, Robert. n.d. Holocaust Education – Ein Neues Unterrichtsfach? Die Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research. http://www.gedenkstaettenpaedagogik-bayern.de/holocaust_education.htm.

- Spiegel online. 2010. Seehofer schwört CSU gegen die Grünen ein. *Spiegel online*. <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/0,1518,726272,00.html>.
- Statistisches Bundesamt. 2010. Bevölkerung und Erwerbstätigkeit: Bevölkerung mit Migrationshintergrund – Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus 2009. <http://www.destatis.de/jetspeed/portal/cms/Sites/destatis/Internet/DE/Navigation/Publikationen/Publikationen.psml?cmspath=struktur,vollanzeige.csp&ID.%2520=1025903>.
- Wetzel, Juliane. 2006. Antisemitismus als Gegenstand des Schulunterrichts?. Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. http://www.bpb.de/themen/K2I03C.0.0,Antisemitismus_als_Gegenstand_des_Schulunterrichts.html.
- Zastrow, Volker. 2005. Ein Wort für das Namenlose. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, January 27.

Contributors

Joëlle Allouche-Benayoun is associate professor and researcher at Groupe Sociologies, Religions, Laïcités/ Centre nationale de recherche scientifique, France. She was president of the Cercle de Généalogie Juive from 2004–2011, and has been vice-president since 2011, as well as chief editor of the *Revue du Cercle de Généalogie Juive*. Her research areas are Judaism, gender, training, and identity (prescribed and inherited). Allouche-Benayoun's publications include "Les Juifs d'Algérie" (with Doris Bensimon) (1998); "Mutations de la fonction rabbinique en France" (with L. Podselver) (2003); "Identité occultée, Mémoire à restaurer. Enquête 2007–2008 auprès des adhérents du Cercle de généalogie Juive" (collaborative) (2009).

Rıfat N. Bali was born in 1948 in Istanbul and is a graduate of Sorbonne University Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes. He is the author and editor of numerous articles and books. A complete list of his publications can be found at: www.rifatbali.com.

Georges Bensoussan is an historian and the editing director of the Mémorial de la Shoah, Paris and the *Revue d'Histoire de la Shoah*. He is the author of a number of articles and books including "Juifs en pays arabes. Le grand déracinement 1850–1975" (2012), "Antisemitism in French Schools: Turmoil of a Republic" (2004), "Histoire de la Shoah" (2006) and "Europe, une passion génocidaire" (2006).

Mehmet Can studied to be a teacher of history and social sciences at the Ruhr Universität Bochum. Since 2006, he has been active in several historical-political education projects. In 2009, he started working for the Kreuzberg Initiative against Antisemitism. He has designed educational material to address the Israel-Palestine conflict as well as antisemitism within economic argumentation frameworks. In addition to this work, he is also involved in education at Holocaust memorial sites.

Sara Valentina Di Palma is an historian cooperating with the University of Siena (Italy), specialising in children in the Holocaust, HMD and memory of the Holocaust, migrations to Israel from Muslim countries and gendered violence in war. She is currently employed at the synagogue and Jewish Museum in Siena and Florence as an expert in didactics on the Holocaust.

Monique Eckmann is professor at the School for Social Work, University of Applied Sciences Western Switzerland (HES-SO), in Geneva. She is a member of CERES (Centre de recherche sociale) and CEDIC (Centre d'études de la diversité culturelle et de la citoyenneté) at the HES-SO. She has published widely on intergroup conflicts and identities, intercultural memory, intercultural dialogue and education.

Remco Ensel studied anthropology and history at the University of Amsterdam. He teaches cultural history at the Radboud University Nijmegen and is affiliated with the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies. His publications include "Saints and Servants in Southern Morocco" (Leiden, Brill 1999) – on ethnicity, racism and local Islam. A monograph on the Moroccan-Dutch history of anti-Zionism and antisemitism is in preparation.

Evelien Gans is the chair of the Modern Jewish History department at the University of Amsterdam. She is affiliated with the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (NIOD). She published "Gojse nijd & joods narcisme" [Goyish envy & Jewish narcissism] (1994), and received the Henriëtte Roland Holst award for her thesis "De kleine verschillen die het leven uitmaken" [The Small Differences that Determine Life (about Jewish social-democrats and socialist Zionists in The Netherlands)] (1999) and the Henriëtte Boas award for her the first part of the double biography Jaap en Ischa Meijer. Een joodse geschiedenis 1912–1956 [Jaap and Ischa Meijer. A Jewish history 1912–1956] (2008). Since 2010, Evelien Gans has led the NOW (Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research) research project "The Dynamics of Contemporary Antisemitism in a Globalising Context. 'The Jew' as a Framing Model in The Netherlands, Morocco, Poland and Turkey." See <http://www.dutchantisemitism.nl/www.dutchantisemitism.nl>.

Karoline Georg studied Political Science in Berlin and York, England. Since 2006, she has been involved in educational work against antisemitism in Berlin where she managed a project aimed at the development of new approaches to Holocaust education in the immigration society. She was also a freelance researcher of the persecution of Jews during National Socialism in Berlin until 2011. She is currently a Hans-Böckler-Stiftung scholarship holder and is working on her dissertation "The Jewish Inmates of the Concentration Camp Columbia-Haus 1933–1936 in Berlin".

Ruth Hatlapa is working on her dissertation on anti-Americanism in Western European media at the Faculty of Philology and History, Augsburg University. She studied Cultural Studies, Political Science and History at Humboldt University and the Freie Universität Berlin. Besides her academic activities, she is engaged in educational projects fighting antisemitism.

Günther Jikeli earned his PhD at the Centre for Research on Antisemitism, Technical University Berlin. He is co-director of the International Institute for Education and Research on Antisemitism and affiliated with the Groupe Sociologies, Religions, Laïcités - CNRS, Paris. From 2011 to 2012, he was OSCE/ODIHR Adviser on Combating Antisemitism. He is the author of many scholarly papers on the subject of contemporary antisemitism, discrimination and education. He is the author of

“Antisemitismus und Diskriminierungserfahrungen junger Muslime in Europa” (Klartext, 2012).

Philip Spencer is Professor of Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Kingston University, London, where he is also the director of the Helen Bamber Centre for the Study of Rights, Conflict and Mass Violence. He is the author of (Routledge, 2012); and of (Edinburgh University Press, 2005) and (Sage, 2002).

Annemarike Stremmelaar studied Turkish Languages and Cultures at the Department of the Islamic Middle East at Leiden University. The subject of her master’s thesis was “Islamist Debate in Turkey of Max Weber’s ‘The Protestant Work Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism’”. In 2007, she defended the PhD dissertation “Justice and Revenge in the Ottoman Rebellion of 1703” at Leiden University. Subsequently, she worked at the Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM) as editor of the ISIM Review. From 2008 to 2010, she also taught “History of the Middle East” at the Department of Arabic and Islam at Radboud University Nijmegen. She is currently employed as a researcher on the project “The Dynamics of Contemporary Antisemitism in a Globalising Context” at the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Amsterdam.

Dr. Esther Webman is a senior research fellow at the Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Antisemitism and Racism and the Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies at Tel Aviv University. She is the head of the Zeev Vered Desk for the Study of Tolerance and Intolerance. Webman is presently engaged in a study of Arab antisemitism and Arab perceptions of the Holocaust, as well as in the analysis of the Arab discourse on the Arab-Israeli conflict and its impact on Muslim communities in the West.

Juliane Wetzel is an historian; she received her PHD in Munich in 1986. From 1986–1991, she was a researcher at the Institute for Contemporary History, Munich. Since 1991, Wetzel has been a senior researcher and academic staff member at the Center for Research on Antisemitism, Technical University Berlin. She is a member of the German delegation to the Task Force For International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (and chaired its Academic Working Group for four years), a member of the German Bundestag’s Expert Board on Combating Antisemitism, and is also a member of the Board of the Simon Wiesenthal Institute Vienna. Wetzel has written numerous publications on contemporary antisemitism, Jewish persecution and emigration during the National Socialist era, solidarity and help for Jews in Italy during Nazi occupation, antisemitism in Italy since the 1930s, and Jewish displaced persons in Germany after World War II.

Michael Whine is the director of Government and International Affairs at the Community Security Trust and director of Defence and Group Relations at the Board of Deputies of British Jews. He also acts as consultant on defence and security for the European Jewish Congress, which he represents at the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). He has been professionally involved in researching religious and political extremism, including antisemitism, for over twenty-five years and is the author of many scholarly papers on these subjects.

Index

A

Ahmadinedjad, 21
Aladdin Project (Project Aladin), 5, 36, 106
Albania (Albanian), 4, 105
Algeria (Alergia, Algerian), 4, 109, 125, 126
Al Husseini, Grand mufti of Jerusalem, 30, 78
Anne Frank, 31, 37, 100, 108, 155–158, 160, 166–167
Anne Frank House, 37, 155–158, 160
Antisemitism (antisemitic, anti-Zionism, judeophobia), 2, 13, 19–27, 30, 52, 61, 71–82, 88, 106, 139, 153–170, 182
Arab countries, 7
Armenian genocide (Armenia), 7, 62
Auschwitz, 2, 3, 5, 6, 13, 17, 19, 29, 31, 32, 34, 35, 37, 47, 48, 57, 61, 64, 71, 73, 91, 100, 107, 124, 135, 144, 146, 157, 175, 176

B

Barbarism, 48
Belgium (Belgian), 34, 100, 168
Bosnia (Bosnian), 4, 75, 105
Britain (British), 2–4, 7, 33, 34, 42, 43, 47, 56, 64, 73, 75, 79, 98, 106, 111, 114, 119, 122, 159, 162, 168
Buchenwald, 13, 149
Bystander, 1, 8, 72–73, 138, 145, 146, 151

C

Center for Information and Documentation on Israel, 97, 156
Cohen, J., 91, 95, 101, 157

Cold War, 13, 15
Collaborator, 4, 37, 91, 92, 138, 145
Colonialism, 44, 81, 98, 99, 168
Community, 3, 7, 14, 15, 29, 31–36, 44, 50, 61, 62, 68, 72, 75, 76, 86, 118, 127–129, 134, 137, 141, 144, 146, 176, 186
Community Security Trust, 75
Compensation payments, 120–121
Competition, 136, 146, 181–183
Concentration camp, labor camp, extermination camp, 4, 14, 34, 37, 41, 62, 66, 78, 107–110, 117, 118, 124, 127, 136, 139, 149, 166
Conspiracy theories, 5, 9, 24, 99, 105, 107, 110, 111, 114, 115, 128, 168, 175
Council of Europe, 31
Culture, 1, 8, 13, 16, 19, 23, 48, 49, 76, 77, 79, 86, 134, 141, 144, 150–151, 154, 156, 158, 176, 179, 180
Culture of remembrance, 111

D

Dachau, 34, 62
Day of remembrance, 2, 23, 30, 31
Dialogue, 6, 29, 33, 134, 137–139, 147, 148, 166
Drancy, 34, 108
Duke, D., 53

E

Education (school, teachers, curriculum), 2, 22, 30, 61, 71, 107, 133, 153–170, 173–193

- Egypt (Egyptian), 14, 41–48, 54, 56, 88, 114, 115
- Eichmann, A., 34, 46, 74
- Emotion, 15, 16, 21, 67, 107, 111, 113, 115, 118, 121–123, 128, 135–137, 139, 140, 147–149, 151, 160, 162, 169, 173, 179
- Empathy, 6–8, 17, 26, 42, 48, 107, 118, 123, 125, 129, 134, 137, 138, 143, 144, 146, 147, 149, 160, 180, 181, 185
- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) (EUMC), 2, 25, 112
- Exploitation, 46, 77, 122–123, 140
- Extermination (annihilation), 2, 4, 10, 21, 23, 36, 37, 42, 48, 49, 53, 55, 62, 78, 94, 108, 124, 125, 135, 145, 184
- F**
- Faurisson, R., 10, 52, 53, 66
- Forced labour, 4
- France (French), 111–7, 10, 13–16, 25, 31, 34–37, 47, 51, 53, 63, 65, 106, 107, 109, 112, 119, 124–126, 177
- Friedländer, S., 73, 98
- G**
- Garaudy, R., 10, 51, 52, 65, 66
- Genocide, 1–3, 7, 13–17, 19, 24–26, 30, 35, 48, 56, 57, 62–68, 74–78, 80, 81, 88, 135, 140, 144, 155, 166, 170
- Germany (German), 1, 13, 19, 34, 41, 61, 78, 86, 105, 139, 173–193
- Guilt, 2, 4, 6, 10, 13, 14, 16, 19, 21, 23, 77, 91, 98, 105, 113, 120–121, 129, 139, 175, 176, 180
- H**
- Hamas, 7, 85–101, 160, 161, 165, 166
- Hezbollah, 126
- Hilberg, R., 15, 72, 73
- Hitler, 6, 15, 21, 55, 64, 78, 86, 107, 136, 159, 190
- Holocaust
 - commemoration, 3, 5–7, 29–38, 106
 - denial, 2, 3, 5–8, 19, 21, 26, 27, 30–35, 37, 49, 52, 53, 65–66, 68, 93, 105, 106, 110, 112, 128, 166
 - education, 2, 6, 8, 22, 26, 27, 30, 35, 37, 38, 107, 121, 137, 138, 153–170, 174
 - survivor, 47, 95, 108, 125
 - trivialisation (*/relativisation/diminishing/revision/obscure/equation/comparison/analogy*), 2, 4, 6, 8, 19–22, 24, 26, 46, 49, 52, 53, 57, 107, 113, 115–117, 149
- Holocaust industry (Jewish lobby), 7, 24, 65, 67, 68
- Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD), 3, 6, 7, 20, 31, 33, 56, 71–82, 106, 110, 122
- I**
- Identity (identity, identification, identitarian), 1, 3, 4, 8, 10, 14, 15, 37, 73, 74, 90, 127, 129, 136, 138, 143–148, 150, 151, 156, 163–165, 168, 169, 176, 178–184
- Internet (Internet, World Wide Web), 6, 24, 26, 94, 101, 108, 175
- Intifada, 25, 52, 56, 64, 87, 97, 157
- Iran (Iran, Iranian), 17, 21, 26, 30, 38, 53–56, 65, 88, 168
- Iraq war, 79, 112
- Irving, D., 65, 66
- Islamic Cultural Centre of Italy, 34
- Islamic Culture Centre, 76
- Islamism (Islamism, Islamist), 7, 30, 32, 33, 52, 54–57, 61, 64–66, 68, 76, 78, 101, 161, 175, 182
- Islamophobia, 77, 78, 101
- Israel (Israel, Israeli), 2, 13, 20, 30, 42, 62, 73, 85, 105, 133–151, 154, 182
- Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Middle East conflict, Israeli-Palestinian conflict), 2, 6, 8–10, 21, 27, 63, 86–88, 113, 115, 116, 118, 119, 128, 129, 133, 136, 150, 154, 156, 160, 162, 168–170, 175, 182
- Italy (Italy, Italian), 4, 7, 32, 34, 53, 71–82
- J**
- Jewish-Muslim dialogue, Jewish-Moroccan dialogue, 6, 29, 157
- Joke, 24, 89, 90, 142, 161, 163, 164, 166
- K**
- King of Morocco, 4
- Knowledge about the Holocaust, 2, 8, 23, 26, 27, 105, 107, 108, 118, 121, 123, 127–129, 134
- Kreuzberger Initiative gegen Antisemitismus, 5, 106

L

Language, 30, 31, 111, 135, 165
 Lanzmann, C., 5, 110
 Levi, P., 36, 73
 Lipstadt, D., 3, 47, 110, 112

M

Maghreb (Libya, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, North Africa), 4, 5, 14, 29, 76, 78, 96, 106, 109, 111, 124–127, 165, 167
 Manichean view, 8, 127
 Mémorial de la Shoah, 5
 Memory, 7–9, 16, 20, 21, 23, 24, 51, 56, 71–73, 81, 86, 90, 91, 93, 100, 133–151, 169, 176, 177, 184
 Metaphor, 8, 92, 93, 113, 115–117, 122, 128
 Middle East conflict (Middle East conflict, Israeli-Palestinian conflict), 2, 6, 8–10, 21, 27, 63, 86–88, 113, 115, 116, 118, 119, 128, 129, 133, 136, 150, 154, 156, 160, 162, 168–170, 175, 182
 Migrants (Migrant, minority, immigration), 3, 5, 6, 9, 20, 22, 24, 26, 29, 30, 36, 44, 95, 100, 106, 113–115, 121, 137, 139, 141, 170, 174, 175, 177–183, 185
 Morocco (Morocco, Moroccan), 4, 5, 76, 85, 86, 96, 97, 99, 106, 111, 125, 144, 153–158, 161, 163–165, 170
 Muslim Brotherhood, 32, 76
 Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), 3, 7, 33, 34, 56, 75, 106, 122
 Myth, 6, 9, 13–15, 22, 26, 65, 66, 95, 99, 109, 135, 136

N

Nakba (Nakba, Naqba), 6, 8, 29, 51, 133, 136, 137, 139–144, 146, 148–150, 164
 Narrative, 6, 9, 21, 23, 30, 35, 36, 46, 48, 51, 109–111, 128, 134, 136, 143, 147, 149, 155, 164, 166–170, 173, 177, 178, 182, 184, 185
 Nation, 14, 26, 45, 48, 77, 80, 98, 99, 134, 135, 137, 168, 179
 National socialism, 1, 9, 22, 25, 26, 36, 117, 126, 135, 139, 140, 142, 173, 176, 178–181, 184, 185
 Neighbourhood, 85, 156, 184
 Neo-Nazis, 35, 64, 93, 122, 126, 127, 129
 The Netherlands (Netherlands, Dutch), 7, 8, 16, 34, 37, 38, 85–101, 153–170

North African countries (North Africa, Maghreb, Libya, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia), 4, 5, 14, 29, 76, 78, 96, 106, 109, 111, 124–127, 165, 167
 Norway (Norway, Norwegian), 7, 36
 Nuremberg trials, 43, 46

O

Occupation, 4, 30, 35, 41, 48, 55, 62, 80, 87, 88, 97, 105, 136, 139
 Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), 2, 25, 31, 32, 37, 107, 121
 Otherness (Otherness, the Other), 4, 8–10, 14, 27, 33, 34, 38, 42, 47, 48, 53, 62, 68, 71, 76, 77, 80, 87, 94, 100, 124, 133–151, 162, 164–166, 176
 Ottoman Armenian (Ottoman), 61, 62, 76

P

Palestinian (Palestinian, Palestine), 2, 21, 29, 44, 63, 75, 85, 107, 133–151, 154, 190
 Panarabism (Panarabism, Arab nationalist), 7, 30
 Peace education, 8, 134, 138, 143
 Perceptions, 1, 5–10, 13, 14, 41–57, 61–68, 78, 105–129, 134, 150, 151, 159, 170, 174, 175, 177–182
 Perpetrator, 1, 6, 8, 20–22, 25, 36, 48, 49, 56, 72–73, 77, 78, 81, 87, 92, 107, 113, 114, 122, 138, 139, 145–147, 151, 158, 166, 175, 176, 180, 182
 Petain (Petain, Vichy), 13
 Philosemitism, 94–96
 Prejudice, 19, 22, 27, 80, 89, 108, 117, 175
 Projection, 6, 21, 113, 136

R

Racism, 3, 25, 38, 45, 48, 51, 57, 77, 78, 94, 139, 165, 177
 Remembrance, 1–3, 5, 6, 9, 14, 17, 19–27, 30, 31, 33, 36, 37, 61, 71, 108, 122, 129, 154, 155, 158, 173, 176, 178–180, 182
 Responsibility, 9, 10, 15, 17, 20–23, 27, 50, 56, 62, 67, 73, 76, 77, 113, 125, 136, 139, 145, 146, 149, 176
 Revenge, 111, 115–116, 128
 Righteous among the nations (righteous), 26, 35, 63

S

- Saving Jews (saveing Jews, saved Jews),
4, 30, 105
- Schindler's List, 63, 66, 67, 94, 110, 167
- School trips to Auschwitz (school trips), 3
- Secondary antisemitism, 2, 6, 8, 19–21, 24,
25, 90–94, 113, 120, 121, 129, 175
- Second World War (Second World War,
WWII), 3, 4, 6, 19, 36–38, 41,
43–46, 48, 53, 55, 63, 96, 105, 107,
108, 119–121, 125, 129, 179
- Stereotypes (stereotype, cliché), 9, 15, 21–26,
80, 88–92, 94, 96, 98, 114, 115,
128, 161, 162, 168, 181, 182
- Struma, 63
- Sufferings, 6, 8, 14, 15, 29, 33, 45, 47–49, 51,
56, 68, 77, 92, 93, 100, 107,
112–118, 122, 128, 129, 134, 139,
140, 143, 145–147, 149–151, 164,
181–183
- Surveys (survey, poll), 2–4, 9, 15, 20, 22, 32,
34, 35, 80, 106, 112, 123, 140,
153–155, 158–160, 164, 170, 174
- Survivor, 7, 13–16, 21, 43, 47, 72–74, 80, 81,
89, 95, 108, 125, 146, 167
- Switzerland (Swiss, Switzerland), 7, 36

T

- Taboo, 6, 19, 21, 90–92, 121, 135–137
- Task Force for International Cooperation on
Holocaust Education,
Remembrance and Research (ITF),
26, 30, 31, 35–37, 158
- Totalitarianism (totalitarian, Stalinism,
totalitarianism), 6, 13, 15, 23,
31, 137

- Tunisia (Tunisia, Tunisian), 4, 76, 132
- Turkey (Turkey, Turkish), 3–5, 7, 22, 26,
29, 31, 32, 36, 61–68, 86, 95,
97, 99, 106, 111, 118, 119, 121,
122, 127, 149, 163, 169, 174,
177–179, 184

U

- Ülkümen, S., 63
- United Nations (UN) (UN, United Nations,
UNESCO), 30, 31, 45, 48, 56, 61,
119, 168

V

- Van Gogh, T., 8, 90–93, 95, 96, 98,
101, 164
- Vichy (Vichy, Petain) 13
- Victim, 1, 13, 20, 29, 45, 61, 71, 88, 107, 133,
164, 181
- Victimhood, 48, 55, 135, 136, 146, 164,
181–183

W

- Warsaw Ghetto, 79, 80, 108
- Working definition of antisemitism, 2, 24

Y

- Yad Vashem, 5, 30–32, 63, 106

Z

- Zionism, 2, 7, 22, 32, 42–49, 52–55, 57,
98–100, 143