

National Socialism and Anti-Semitism in the Arab World

Anti-Semitism based on the notion of a Jewish world conspiracy is not rooted in Islamic tradition but, rather, in European ideological models. The decisive transfer of this ideology to the Muslim world took place between 1937 and 1945 under the impact of Nazi propaganda. Important to this process were the Arabic-language service broadcast by the German shortwave transmitter in Zeesen between 1939 and 1945, and the role of Haj Amin el-Husseini, the Mufti of Jerusalem, who was the first to translate European anti-Semitism into an Islamic context. Although Islamism is an independent, anti-Semitic, antimodern mass movement, its main early promoters - the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the Mufti and the Qassamites in Palestine - were supported financially and ideologically by agencies of the German National Socialist government.

"Listen!" says a rabbi to a young Jew. "We have received an order from above. We need the blood of a Christian child for the unleavened bread for the Passover feast." In the following shot, a terrified youngster is seized from the neighborhood. Then the camera zooms in on the child for a close-up of his throat being cut. The blood spurts from the wound and pours into a metal basin.

The Al-Manar satellite channel that broadcast this episode is run by the Islamist Hizbollah ("Party of God"). The scene is part of a twenty-nine-part series entitled *Al-Shatat* ("Diaspora"), produced by Al-Manar with Syrian government backing and broadcast for the first time during Ramadan in 2003. Episode by episode, the series peddles the fantasy of the Jewish world conspiracy: Jews have brought death and destruction upon humanity, Jews unleashed both world wars, Jews discovered chemical weapons and destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki with nuclear bombs.

With a permanent staff of three hundred, this channel has the greatest reach in the Arab-Islamic world after al-Jazeera. Ten million people a day tune in to the round-the-clock broadcasts from Beirut. Al-Manar ("the Beacon") is the first and to date only satellite channel that, not even pretending to objectivity, sees itself as the global voice of Islamism. Its popularity is due to its countless video clips, which use inspiring graphics and uplifting music to promote suicide bombing. Al-Manar not only pushes for terrorist acts against Israel but inspires, justifies, and acclaims them.²

Yet three months after the broadcast of the Al-Shatat series, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), a think tank with close ties to the German Social Democratic Party (SPD), and the Hizbollah's "research department" organized a joint conference in Beirut titled "The Islamic World and Europe: From Dialogue to Agreement." Just as remarkable as the cooperation between an institution of a German party of government and an Islamist terror organization was the conference agenda, which included an item on "occupation and resistance" but nothing on Al-Manar's anti-Semitic agitation.³

This casual attitude toward Islamist Jew-hatred is typical of the discourse in Europe. Whereas the right-wing anti-Semitism of politicians like Le Pen in France or of German MP Martin Hohmann provokes public indignation, when Muslims express exactly the same anti-Semitism it is often ignored or played down as an alleged reaction to the Middle East conflict. This silence over Islamist anti-Semitism persists alongside an accompanying silence over its roots in National Socialism, as the example of the Zeesen transmitter confirms.

In Zeesen, a town with some four thousand inhabitants to the south of Berlin, once stood one of the world's most powerful shortwave transmitters. From 1939 onward, it broadcast its daily Arabic-language program. Of all the foreign-language services, the Oriental Service had "absolute priority. It reached out to Arabs, Turks, Persians, and Indians and had an eighty-strong staff, including freelance announcers and translators."⁴ Between 1939 and

1945, at a time when, in the Arab world, listening to the radio took place primarily in public squares or bazaars and coffee houses, no other station was more popular than the Zeesen service, which skillfully mingled anti-Semitic propaganda with quotations from the Koran and Arabic music. The Allies in the Second World War were presented as lackeys of the Jews and the notion of the "United Jewish Nations" drummed into the audience. At the same time, the Jews were attacked as the worst enemies of Islam. "The Jew since the time of Mohammed has never been a friend of the Muslim, the Jew is the enemy and it pleases Allah to kill him."⁵ Today, this same message is being put out on satellite by Hizbollah's Al-Manar TV channel. So what are the historical connections between the shortwave transmitter in Zeesen and the Beirut satellite channel?

National-Socialist Propaganda

A highlight of Radio Zeesen's output was the demand for jihad by the most popular figure in the Arab-Islamic world of the time, the Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin el-Husseini (1895-1974). From 1941 onward he lived in Berlin, supervising Arabic radio broadcasting out of Zeesen, Athens, and Rome.⁶ Nobody promoted hatred of Jews among Muslims more effectively than the Mufti. The European responsibility for this is clear: el-Husseini had after all been appointed to and promoted in office by European powers. It was the British who, having first sentenced him to ten years in jail for anti-Jewish incitement in 1920, then amnestied him in 1921 and made him Mufti against the will of the majority of Palestinians. It was the Germans who paid him for his services between 1937 and 1945. And it was the French who in 1946, when the Mufti was being pursued internationally as a war criminal, helped him escape to Egypt and continue his activities.⁷

Nobody had a greater influence on the early history of the Middle East conflict than the Mufti, who as president of the Supreme Muslim Council was not only the supreme religious authority but also the central figure in Palestinian nationalism. In the 1930s, there were countless Arab nationalists who viewed Germany as an ally against the British without concerning themselves with the nature of the Hitler regime. Things were different where the Mufti was concerned: he knew what the regime was about and was attracted to it for that very reason.

As early as spring 1933, he assured the German consul in Jerusalem that "the Muslims inside and outside Palestine welcome the new regime of Germany and hope for the extension of the fascist, anti-democratic governmental system to other countries."⁸ The youth organization of the party established by the Mufti operated for a time under the name Nazi Scouts and adopted Hitler Youth-style shorts and leather belts. During the 1936-1939 Palestinian revolt, the swastika was used as a mark of identity: Arabic leaflets and graffiti were liberally decorated with it, Arab children welcomed each other with the Hitler salute, and vast numbers of German flags and pictures of Hitler were displayed even at celebrations of Mohammed's birthday. Anyone obliged to travel through areas involved in the Palestinian revolt would attach a swastika to their vehicle to ward off attacks by Arab snipers.⁹

However, until the summer of 1937, this support was awkward for the German government. Berlin politely but firmly rejected the Arab officers of cooperation. While, on the one hand, Hitler had already stated his belief in the "racial inferiority" of the Arabs in *Mein Kampf* and contemptuously rejected their "Holy War,"¹⁰ on the other, the Auswärtige Amt (German Foreign Office) was extremely anxious not to jeopardize British appeasement of Berlin prematurely by activities in the Middle East, especially since the Mediterranean fell within the sphere of responsibility of Germany's Italian ally.

Berlin revised this approach for the first time in June 1937. The trigger was the proposal from the British Peel Commission for the division of the Palestine Mandate territory into a smaller Jewish and a larger Muslim-Arab state. The formation of a Jewish state "is not in Germany's interest," was the instant response of Foreign Minister Konstantin von Neurath, since such a state "would create an additional position of power under international law for

international Jewry. Germany therefore has an interest in strengthening the Arab world as a counterweight against such a possible increase in power for world Jewry."¹¹

Strengthening the Arabs against the Jews - it is true that Berlin initially pursued this new course surreptitiously, lest it alienate London. Nevertheless, the scale of the operations now set in motion was impressive. Students from Arab countries received German scholarships, firms took on Arab apprentices, and Arab party leaders were invited to the Nuremberg party rallies and military chiefs to Wehrmacht maneuvers. An "Arab Club" was established in Berlin as the center for Palestine-related agitation and Arabic-language broadcasting.¹²

Under the direction of the German Propaganda Ministry, the Deutsche Nachrichtenbüro (German News Agency - DNB), whose regional headquarters in Jerusalem had set up an Arab service in 1936, stepped up its work. The head of DNB-Jerusalem, Dr. Franz Reichert, who had excellent links not only with the Mufti but also with the Arabic press, bribed journalists and brought dissident newspapers back on board with lucrative advertising orders.

In September 1937, two members of the Jewish Department of the SS' secret service (Sicherheitsdienst - SD), one of them Adolf Eichmann, carried out an exploratory mission in the Middle East lasting several weeks. Extended visits by the leader of Hitler Youth, Baldur von Schirach, and the head of the Abwehr (counterintelligence service), Wilhelm Canaris, followed. Finally, in April 1939 the head of the Foreign Office's Oriental Department, Otto von Hentig, also spent time in Palestine and Egypt. This activism was not without results: von Schirach donated the money for the establishment of an "Arab Club" in Damascus in which German officials trained recruits for the Mufti's insurgents and Canaris covered the region with a spy network.¹³

The most effective tool, however, was the Arabic-language broadcasting out of Zeesen, "our long-range gun in the ether" as Goebbels dubbed it. It began regular service on 25 April 1939, transmitting daily at 17.45 hours Berlin time.¹⁴ It ridiculed any Arab wishing to negotiate with the Zionists. "The Berlin radio announcer, for instance, used regularly to refer to the Amir Abdallah as 'Rabbi Abdallah'," reported Nevill Barbour, later a BBC reporter. "It was therefore not easy to counter Nazi propaganda on the subject of the Jewish National Home in Palestine."¹⁵ But Radio Zeesen was also hard to combat because it had no scruples about mobilizing anti-Western antipathies: with its pro-Arab shift, Berlin had discovered the antimodernist potential of Islam.

The Mufti's Anti-Semitism

It was not only Heinrich Himmler who waxed lyrical about the "ideological closeness" of National Socialism and Islam, coining the concept of *Muselgermanen* ("Muslimo-Germans").¹⁶ Haj Amin el-Husseini, too, referred to the parallels between Muslim and German ideals, identifying the following points of contact: (1) monotheism - unity of leadership; (2) the ordering power - obedience and discipline; (3) the struggle and the honor of falling in battle; (4) community; (5) family and offspring; (6) glorification of work and creativity; and (7) attitude toward the Jews - "in the struggle against Jewry, Islam and National Socialism come very close to one another."¹⁷

However, precisely this last point was by no means self-evident. Racist anti-Semitism and the fantasy of the Jewish world conspiracy were of European origin and foreign to the original Islamic view of the Jews. Only in the Christ legend did the Jews appear as a deadly and powerful force who allegedly went so far as to kill God's only son.

Islam was quite a different story. Here it was not the Jews who murdered the Prophet, but the Prophet who murdered the Jews: in the years between 623 and 627 Mohammed enslaved, expelled, or killed all the Jewish tribes of Medina. As a result, the characteristic features of Christian anti-Semitism did not arise in the Muslim world. "There were no fears of Jewish conspiracy and domination, no charges of diabolic evil. Jews were not accused of

poisoning wells or spreading the plague."¹⁸ Instead, the Jews were treated with contempt or condescending tolerance. This cultural inheritance made the idea that the Jews of all people could represent a permanent danger for the Muslims and the world seem absurd.

This insane idea had therefore to be hammered into the Arab- Islamic world all the more forcefully. The conflict over immigration and land ownership in Palestine was not the reason, merely an opportunity, for its spread. Thus, for example, the pamphlet on "Islam and Jewry" distributed by the Germans to Muslim members of the "Handzar" Bosnian SS division talked about an "ancient enmity," while Radio Zeesen evoked in ever-new variations the theme of the "eternal enemy, the Jew." A speech given by the Mufti in November 1943 is typical:

This people has been the enemy of the Arabs and Islam since it came into being. The Holy Koran expressed this old enmity in the following words: "you will find that the most hostilely-disposed toward the believers are the Jews." They tried to poison the praiseworthy Prophet, put up resistance to him, were filled with hostility to him and plotted against him. This was the case over 1300 years ago. Since then, they have never ceased to hatch plots against the Arabs and Mohammedans.¹⁹

Thus was an eternal threat to all Muslims concocted from Mohammed's defeated contemporaries.

For the Mufti, the reference back to the seventh century fit the bill for a second reason: his hatred of the Jews was a declaration of war on the "invasion of liberal ideas" into the world of Islam. Since the start of the 20th century, Egypt had been opening up to the outside world; in the 1920s Turkey replaced the Caliphate with the Atatürkist model; and Reza Khan, too, was promoting the secularization of Iran. The Mufti made not the slightest concession to this reformist trend in his sphere of control. He saw Jerusalem as the crystallization point for the "rebirth of Islam" and Palestine as the center from whence resistance to the Jews and the modern world was destined to emanate. Speaking at a religious conference in 1935, the Mufti complained: "The cinema, the theatre and some shameless magazines enter our houses and courtyards like adders, where they kill morality and demolish the foundation of society." The Jews were blamed for this alleged corruption of moral values, as demonstrated by another statement of Haj Amin el-Husseini: "They [the Jews] have also spread here their customs and usages which are opposed to our religion and to our whole way of life. The Jewish girls who run around in shorts demoralise our youth by their mere presence."²⁰

El-Husseini tirelessly used his office to Islamize anti-Zionism and provide a religious rationale for hatred of Jews. Anyone who failed to accept his guidelines would be denounced by name in the mosque during Friday prayers, excluded from the rites of marriage and burial, or physically threatened. The Mufti implemented this policy along with his most prominent Palestinian ally of the time, the Islamic fundamentalist Izz al-Din al-Qassam, whose name is borne by Hamas's suicide-bombing units. Al-Qassam was the first sheikh of modern times who, in 1931 in the Haifa region, set up a movement that united the ideology of a devout return to the original Islam of the seventh century with the practice of militant jihad against the infidels.²¹

The unrest that began in 1936 and that has gone down in history as the "Arab revolt" was the initial testing ground for the emergent Islamist ideology. Here for the first time terrorist methods were employed that would later be inculcated among Muslims in Algeria, Afghanistan, and Iran.

Nucleus of Islamism

The "Arab revolt," which continued in stages until the start of the Second World War, began in April 1936 as a wave of strikes against Jewish immigration and British rule.²²The second

phase developed in autumn 1937 after the publication of the Peel Plan on the partition of Palestine. At this point, German foreign policy intervened decisively. "The Mufti himself said that it was at that time only because of German money that it had been possible to carry through the uprising in Palestine. From the outset he made major financial demands that the Nazis in very large measure met."²³

From now on, the character of the unrest was determined by the Mufti and the supporters of Sheikh al-Qassam. In the zones "liberated" from the Jews and British, new dress codes and *shari'a* law were brutally enforced and numerous "un-Islamic" deviationists liquidated. A German biographer of the Mufti reported admiringly in 1943 on the shooting of Palestinian Arabs who resisted the pressure to submit by refusing to wear the kaffiyeh.²⁴ No less draconian were the means used to force Arab Christian women and all other women to wear the veil.

Along with the Jews and the British, Palestinians who sought compromises with Zionism and the Mandatory power and supported the Peel Plan were also targeted. "Sellers of land to the Jews, holders of moderate political views and those whose nationalism was generally suspected," recounts Porath:

...were not always immediately murdered; sometimes they were kidnapped and taken to the mountainous areas under rebel control. There they were thrown into pits infested with snakes and scorpions. After spending a few days there, the victims, if still alive, were brought before one of the rebel courts and usually sentenced to death, or, as a special dispensation, to severe flogging. The terror was so strong that no one, including ulama and priests, dared to perform the proper burial services.²⁵

The unrest culminated in autumn 1938. El-Husseini now had some ten thousand fighters - including three thousand professional soldiers - at his disposal. The most important commands were in the hands of the "Qassamites," while the Mufti directed the revolt from Beirut.²⁶ Dr. Reichert from the Intelligence Bureau had several meetings with representatives of the insurgents and repeatedly emphasized that "on the basis of the Third Reich's undertakings to Haj Amin el-Husseini the Arab nationalists will soon have sufficient financial resources for the continuation of their rebellion."²⁷

Why did the National Socialists want to prolong the unrest? The most important reason was expressed by Alfred Rosenberg, head of the Nazi Party's foreign policy department. "The longer the fire continues to burn in Palestine," he prophesied in December 1938, "the stronger becomes the resistance to the Jewish regime of violence in all the Arab states and beyond that in the other Muslim countries too."²⁸ These words were borne out. It was, for example, the fighting in Palestine that first turned the core organization of Islamism, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, founded in 1928, into the influential organization from whose ranks not only Hamas but also Osama bin Laden's World Islamic Front for Jihad against Jews and Crusaders would later issue. Whereas in 1936 the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood had a mere eight hundred members, by 1938 it already had 200,000. In the intervening period it had undertaken only one campaign: the mobilization behind the Mufti-led revolt in Palestine.²⁹

The Anti-Semitism of the Muslim Brotherhood

Before 1936, there could be no talk of anti-Semitism in Egypt. Jews were well regarded by the population and were influential in economic and political life. The anti-Jewish pamphlets that the NSDAP's local group in Cairo attempted to disseminate fell on deaf ears. In a letter to Berlin in 1933, the group asserted that further leaflets and pamphlets would be of no avail and that instead attention should be turned to where "real conflicts of interests between Arabs and Jews exist; Palestine. The conflict between Arabs and Jews there must be transplanted into Egypt."³⁰

Three years later, that is what happened. In May 1936, immediately after the start of the Palestinian revolt, the Muslim Brotherhood called for a boycott of all Jewish businesses in Egypt. In mosques and factories, the rumor was spread that the Jews and British were destroying the holy places of Jerusalem. Further false reports of hundreds of killed Arab women and children circulated.

After the publication of the Peel Plan, the anti-Jewish agitation was stepped up. Cries of "Down with the Jews!" and "Jews out of Egypt and Palestine!" rang out in violent student demonstrations in Cairo, Alexandria, and Tanta. A column titled "The Menace of the Jews of Egypt" was introduced in the Brotherhood's magazine, *Al-Nadhir*. In it were published the names and addresses of Jewish business proprietors and owners of allegedly Jewish newspapers from across the world, and all evils - from communism to brothels - were attributed to the "Jewish threat." In September 1938, the Brotherhood launched a call for people to wear and consume only goods produced in Islamic countries and in all parts of Egypt to prepare to embark on a jihad to defend the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.³¹

Giselher Wirsing, a prominent journalist of the Third Reich, enthusiastically reported on the shockwaves that the "political earthquake center" in Palestine had created in Egypt. Wirsing, a member of the SS, noted with satisfaction "a marked return to the religious traditions of Islam" and "a fierce hostility to Western liberalism....Recent developments in Egypt...show how strongly this theocracy is able to revive itself after the first onrush of liberalism." Theocracy instead of democracy, Salafism instead of liberalism: this SS man takes a clear line.³²

Priority was now given to supporting the burgeoning Islamist movement in Egypt with German funds. As Brynjar Lia recounts in his monograph on the Muslim Brotherhood:

...Documents seized in the flat of Wilhelm Stellbogen, the Director of the German News Agency (Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro) affiliated to the German Legation in Cairo, show that prior to October 1939 the Muslim Brothers received subsidies from his organisation. Stellbogen was instrumental in transferring these funds to the Brothers, which were considerably larger than the subsidies offered to other anti-British activists. These transfers appear to have been coordinated by Haj Amin el-Husseini and some of his Palestinian contacts in Cairo.³³

The contributions enabled the Muslim Brotherhood to set up a printing plant with twenty-four employees and use the most up-to-date propaganda methods. For example, an eighty-page pamphlet called "Fire and Destruction in Palestine," with fifty photos of alleged acts of violence and torture, was produced and several tens of thousands of copies distributed among the populace.

The Muslim Brotherhood also, of course, enjoyed the assistance of German officers in constructing their military organization and cooperated with Rommel's army in the Second World War. But they never admired Hitler. For Hassan al-Banna, the founder and leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, there was no question of accepting a non-Muslim leader. "When they did express admiration of certain aspects of National Socialism or Fascism, it was usually in the context of demonstrating that the Europeans had implemented some of 'the principles of Islam,' such as a modest dress code, encouragement of early marriage, a strong patriotism and a military *jihad* spirit."³⁴

Thus did the years 1936-1939 shape Islamism as a new and independent, anti-Semitic and antimodern mass movement. Until 1936 the moderate Arab forces, which welcomed or at least tolerated Zionism, had in no way been marginalized. This changed after the National Socialists threw their weight behind the Islamists. They successfully spurred on the unrest in Palestine and so contributed to spreading the idea that the Jews were the enemy to Egypt. The Islamist mass mobilization was financially and ideologically supported by Radio Zeesen and other means of propaganda. This was one of the reasons that it was the Islamism and anti-Semitism of Hassan al-Banna rather than the enlightened modernism of Kemal Atatürk that gained general acceptance in the Arab part of the Islamic world.³⁵

The Zeesen shortwave transmitter appears in retrospect to have been the interface that transferred the anti-Semitic ideology to the Arab world and linked early Arab Islamism with late National Socialism. Although Radio Zeesen ceased operation in April 1945, it was only after that date that its frequencies of hate really began to reverberate in the Arab world.

Brother Hitler

The eighth of May, 1945, was followed by a twofold division of the world. The one division between politico-economic systems is known as the Cold War. The second cleavage, merely covered over by the Cold War, has to do with the persistence of National Socialist modes of thought. In her report on the trial of Adolf Eichmann in 1961, Hannah Arendt cast her gaze into this abyss: "the newspapers in Damascus and Beirut, in Cairo and Jordan did not conceal either their sympathy for Eichmann nor their regret that he 'did not finish the job'; a radio broadcast from Cairo on the opening day of the trial even included a little sideswipe at the Germans, reproaching them for the fact that 'in the last war, no German plane had ever flown over and bombed a Jewish settlement.'"³⁶ The same regret and heartfelt wish to see all Jews finally annihilated was expressed in April 2002 by a columnist in the second largest, state-controlled Egyptian daily Al-Akhbar.

The entire matter [the Holocaust], as many French and British scientists and researchers have proven, is nothing more than a huge Israeli plot aimed at extorting the German government in particular and the European countries in general. But I, personally and in light of this imaginary tale, complain to Hitler, even saying to him from the bottom of my heart, "If only you had done it, brother, if only it had really happened, so that the world could sigh in relief [without] their evil and sin."³⁷

The logic is clear: the Jew is the source of evil in the world that must be destroyed. Israel therefore deserves to be erased from the map. And the Shoah is therefore no crime, but a failed attempt for which a more successful reprise is desired. Demonization of the Jews, legitimization of the Holocaust, and the liquidation of Israel; three sides of an ideological triangle that cannot exist if any one of the sides is missing. But why did this monstrous ideology find its most fertile place of exile in the Arab world after 1945?

Here the Mufti comes back into the picture. Openly and knowing about Auschwitz, he had advocated the Shoah. "Germany," he declared in 1943, has "decided to find a final solution to the Jewish menace, which will end this misfortune in the world."³⁸ Nevertheless, the Mufti's reputation remained intact after 1945. He was, to be sure, personally responsible both for the atrocities committed by the Muslim SS division in Bosnia and for the deaths of thousands of Jewish children in the Holocaust.³⁹ However, in order not to fall out with the Arab world, the United States and Britain refrained from prosecuting him, while France, in whose custody the Mufti had been since 1945, let him escape. When on 10 June 1946 the headlines of the world press announced the Mufti's "flight" from France, "the Arab quarters of Jerusalem and all the Arab towns and villages were garlanded and beflagged, and the great man's portrait was to be seen everywhere."⁴⁰ While amnestying the Mufti, the Allies also rehabilitated his anti-Semitism. Even more: the Arabs saw in the Mufti's impunity "not only a weakness of the Europeans, but also absolution for past and future occurrences," commented Simon Wiesenthal in 1947. Now the pro-Nazi past began to become "a source of pride, not shame."⁴¹

The opposed views of the Holocaust first clashed in November 1947 at the UN General Assembly. On one side were those who considered the Shoah a fact and a catastrophe and were consequently in favor of the partition of Palestine and the founding of Israel.⁴² On the other were those who saw in the UN resolution a further example of the "Jewish world conspiracy." Among the latter was the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hassan Al-Banna, who "considered the whole United Nations intervention to be an international plot carried out by the Americans, the Russians and the British, under the influence of Zionism," while Haj Amin el-Husseini, back in his role as spokesman for the Palestinians, believed

that, instead of Palestine being divided into states, "the Arabs" should "together attack the Jews and destroy them as soon as the British forces have been withdrawn" from Palestine.⁴³

No Arab head of state had the courage to contradict the popular Palestinian leader. And so the cynicism of the West, which left the Mufti undisturbed in 1946, and the opportunism of the Arabs paved the way to one of the most fateful turning points of the 20th century: as Israel was founded on 14 May 1948, the armies of Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon invaded. The general-secretary of the Arab League, Abd al-Rahman Azzam, who had previously stated privately that he considered the partition of Palestine the only rational solution, now stood shoulder to shoulder with the Mufti; "this war," he declared on the day of the Arab attack, "will be a war of destruction."⁴⁴ The new state, to be sure, emerged victorious from this war, at a cost of six thousand Israeli lives. Anti-Semitism, however, took on a new dimension. Gamal Abdul Nasser, whose 1952 putsch was a consequence of the Arab defeat, disseminated the central text of European anti-Semitism, the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, in the Arab world. Moreover, Nasser employed many of the National Socialist war criminals who had evaded justice by fleeing to Egypt in their former sphere of expertise - anti-Jewish propaganda.⁴⁵

After Nasser's military campaign against Israel also failed miserably in the Six-Day War of 1967, the previously incited hate against Jews was radicalized in an Islamist direction. Nasser's anti-Jewish propaganda was still accompanied by a fondness for life's pleasures. Now anti-Semitism was mixed with the Islamists' hatred for sensuality and joy in life and - in taking up the jihad launched thirty years previously in Palestine - popularized as religious resistance against all "corrupters of the world." Now it was "discovered" that not only was everything Jewish evil, but everything evil was Jewish. Thus, the most important manifesto of Islamist anti-Semitism, the essay "Our Struggle with the Jews" by the Muslim Brother Sayyid Qutb - distributed in millions of copies throughout the Islamic world with Saudi Arabian help - declares, with allusions to Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, and Emile Durkheim, that the Jews are responsible for the worldwide moral and sexual decline: "Behind the doctrine of atheistic materialism was a Jew; behind the doctrine of animalistic sexuality was a Jew; and behind the destruction of the family and the shattering of sacred relationships in society was a Jew."⁴⁶ Now Palestine was declared sacred Islamic territory (*Dar al-Islam*), where Jews should not be allowed to govern even a single village, and Israel's destruction a religious duty. Intellectual devastation now spread unimpeded: Jews started to be denigrated by reference to verses in the Koran as "pigs" and "apes," and the claim that the consumption of non-Jewish blood was a religious rite for Jews was offered up as a scientific discovery.⁴⁷ The greatest victims of the Islamist turn were the Muslims themselves. The "struggle against depravity" means the suppression of one's own sensual needs and the return to "sacred social bonds" entails the subjugation of women.

A further escalation took place in 1982 when Hizbollah began systematically to employ people as bombs. The hatred of Jews was now greater than the fear of death. The ideology of destruction turned into the practice of ripping any Jew to pieces. Whenever the possibility of a peaceful solution appeared on the horizon, it would be drowned in the blood of suicidal mass murders. The first major series of suicide bombings began in Palestine in 1993-1994, at precisely the moment when the Oslo peace process was under way. It was resumed in October 2000 after Israel withdrew from Lebanon and had made its most far-reaching concessions yet to the Palestinian side at Camp David.⁴⁸

Islamists and Europeans

From Zeesen to Beirut: the international media campaign against the Jews, which began sixty years ago with a "long-range gun in the ether," is now being pursued in the form of instruction in close combat by satellite. The bloodier the massacres in Israel and Palestine, the higher the viewing figures for Al-Manar and the more successful the anti-Semitic mobilization in the Arab-Islamic world, in turn ensuring a further rise in the death toll in the Middle East conflict. This escalation strategy is not a response to any specific Israeli policy.

Whatever the Israeli government does is subordinated to a mindset that seeks to destroy the Israeli state as the representative of evil.

The "evil," though, is the Jew himself. In September 2001, the legend that following a warning by the Mossad four thousand Jews had not shown up for work at the World Trade Centre on 11 September - a legend invented by Hizbollah and broadcast by Al-Manar - spread like wildfire. This "I-hate-you" virus was proliferated a millionfold by Internet and satellite across the world. What sort of image of "Jews" does it convey? First of all, it assumes that the Mossad is prepared to wade in blood so as to harm the Arabs. Second, it implies that every Jew outside Israel obeys orders from Tel Aviv. Third, it projects Hizbollah's own destructive urges onto the victims: the Jews in New York had, allegedly, cold-bloodedly delivered up thousands of their non-Jewish colleagues to death. Goebbels's dictum that a lie only has to be big enough to be believed was here faithfully followed. Its global spread and acceptance in itself marks a watershed: overnight the fabricated story of a worldwide Jewish conspiracy was popularized as the central interpretative framework for an event of worldwide significance. If today there are "more anti-Semites and more anti-Semitism in the world than ever" as Alain Finkielkraut asserts, then this is due in some measure to Al-Manar.⁴⁹

In Europe this channel, whose costs are covered by, among other things, advertising the German chocolate Milka, the Finnish Smeds cheese, the Austrian Red Bull drink, and the French Gauloises cigarettes, is broadcast by the Eutelsat satellite firm via its Hotbird 4 satellite.⁵⁰ The French newspaper *Libération* estimates that 2.6 million households in France alone can receive the channel, which since 9/11 has also gained growing popularity in Germany's Arab neighborhoods. At least in France the broadcast of the twenty-nine part series *Al-Shatat* sparked immediate protests. Prime Minister Raffarin, having been shown excerpts from the series, is pressing for changes in the media laws in order to block the channel's broadcasts.⁵¹ There is no whiff of any such steps in Germany. As in February 2004 the president of Eutelsat was meeting representatives of the French monitoring agencies to discuss measures to control Al-Manar, in Beirut the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung was sitting down with the people behind the channel - not, however, in order to dissociate themselves from it, but to "facilitate change through rapprochement," as the FES wrote in a press release. "We are hoping that they will come to a certain understanding, and that they will form a sort of permanent committee to sustain such dialogue among the Islamists and Europeans," declared an FES representative in the run-up to the conference.⁵²

From Zeesen to Beirut: why did the anti-Semitic holy warriors in 2002 decide to approach Germany in particular with their conference proposal? The answer is no secret. Udo Steinbach, head of the Deutsche Orient-Institut in Hamburg, quite openly enthused about the "lingering effects of the sympathy traditionally evinced for Germany in the whole region."⁵³ The ideological basis for this sympathy was decisively strengthened by Radio Zeesen and the Mufti's pro-German orientation. Is German foreign policy today picking up the threads of this "sympathy"? Foreign Office officials evade giving a clear answer to this question. Instead, the virulent pro-Nazi sentiment is purposefully ignored and the continuation of a Nazi-like anti-Semitism has met with inexcusable nonchalance.

In Beirut, it was not German neo-Nazis who met Hizbollah and its deputy general-secretary, Sheikh Naeem Qasim, but Social Democrats, that is, declared opponents of fascism.⁵⁴ However, even to mention Hizbollah's Nazi-like anti-Semitism would have removed the basis for this meeting. So instead the conference tested the waters of "change through rapprochement" around topics where residual German and Arab traditions can be drawn on in equal measure, such as "Neocolonialism or 'Benevolent Hegemony'?", "Occupation and Resistance," and "Self-Determination and Independence in a Globalized World."

Some justification was needed after the Beirut conference to bridge the gulf between subjective good intentions and the objective validation of Hizbollah's terror. This justification was "Israel." Participants in the conference tried to make both themselves and critics of the conference believe that Hizbollah was just reacting to Israel's policies.⁵⁵ Certainly, the policies of the Israeli government - like those of any other government - may give rise to anger and cri-

ticism. But no Israeli policy, however deserving of criticism it may be, makes plausible the anti-Semites' tenets that Washington is ruled by Jerusalem and that the Passover meal is prepared with the blood of murdered children.

Anyone, however, who believes in presenting Israel as the scapegoat for Islamist violence is not only diverting attention from the goals of Islamism and its National Socialist heritage, but is also, by adhering to a new "the Jew is guilty" model, reconnecting with the ancient forms of European anti-Semitism.

The Jew is the evil of the world, declares the Islamist station today, in unison with the earlier one based in Zeesen. One cannot get away with fuzzy answers to the question of whether Germany and Europe, in their foreign policies, want to play along with this tradition or to break with it. The absence of clarity is the beginning of complicity, wrote the historian Omer Bartov. Or in the words of Leon Poliakov, "anyone who does not denounce anti-Semitism in its primitive and elementary form, and does not do so precisely because it is primitive and elementary, will have to face the question as to whether he is not thereby sending out a sign of secret approval to anti-Semites all over the world."⁵⁶

Notes

1. This article was translated by Colin Meade.
2. See Avi Jorisch, "Al-Manar: Hizbollah TV," *Middle East Quarterly*, Winter 2004. See also Lisbeth Rausing, "Frequenzen des Hasses. Wie die Hisbollah ihre Mordpropaganda nach Europe trägt," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ), Vol. 13, March 2004 (German).
3. Along with the FES and the Hizbollah Consultative Centre for Studies and Documentation, the Deutsche Orient-Institut Beirut and the University of Birmingham's Centre for the Study of Islam were also involved in organizing the conference, held on 17-19 February 2004. See the FES's press release of 23 February 2004.
4. Werner Schwipps, "Wortschlacht im äther," in DeutscheWelle, ed., *Wortschlacht im äther, Der deutsche Auslandsrundfunk im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Berlin: Haude & Spenerische Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1971), p. 58 (German).
5. Seth Arsenian, "Wartime Propaganda in the Middle East," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (1948): 421; Robert Melka, *The Axis and the Arab Middle East 1930-1945*, thesis, University of Minnesota, University Micro-films, Inc., Ann Arbor, MI, 1966, pp. 47; Heinz Tillmann, *Deutschlands Araberpolitik im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (East Berlin: Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1965), pp. 83 (German). According to Arsenian and Melka, Arabic broadcasting from Zeesen began in 1938.
6. Nicholas Bethell, *Das Palästina-Dreieck, Juden und Araber im Kampf um das britische Mandat 1935 bis 1948* (Frankfurt am Main: Propyläen-Verlag, 1979), p. 240 (German). According to Bethell, El-Husseini was the "Leiter" ("Director") of this station, while according to Hurewitz the Mufti was a director of the "Arab Bureau" in Berlin, which was responsible for preparing and transmitting the Arabic broadcasts, under the supervision of Goebbels's Propaganda Ministry. See J. C. Hurewitz, *The Struggle for Palestine* (New York: Norton, 1951), p. 154.
7. Klaus Gensicke, *Der Mufti von Jerusalem, Amin el-Husseini und die Nationalsozialisten* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang, 1988), pp. 251 (German).
8. Yehoshua Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement: From Riots to Rebellion*, Vol. 2, 1929-1939 (London, 1977), p. 76.
9. Ralf Balke, *Die Landesgruppe der NSDAP in Palästina*, thesis, Universität- Gesamthochschule Essen, 1997, pp. 214, 216 (German); Tillmann, *Deutschlands Araberpolitik*, p. 78 (German); Francis R. Nicosia, *The Third Reich and the Palestine Question* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1975), p. 98. See also Iwo Jordan, *Araberaufstand. Erlebnisse und Dokumente aus Palästina* (Vienna-Leipzig, 1943), pp. 3, 97 (German). Jordan reprints an example of an Arab-Palestinian leaflet with swastikas.
10. Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Munich: Verlag Franz Eher Nachfolger, GmbH, 1934), p. 747 (German).
11. Tillmann, *Deutschlands Araberpolitik*, p. 66. Italy did not seem reliable enough for the anti-Jewish project. In the last analysis, according to the German Foreign Ministry, Italy's

rejection of the Peel Plan was motivated "less by antisemitic animosity than by fear that Britain might make the foundation of a Jewish state in Palestine the basis of its Mediterranean policy." See Melka, *The Axis*, pp. 70.

12. Melka, *The Axis*, p. 53.

13. Hurewitz, *Struggle for Palestine*, p. 87; Balke, *Die Landesgruppe*, p. 204; Melka, *The Axis*, pp. 48.; Michael Cohen, *Retreat from the Mandate* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1978), p. 58; Lukasz Hirsowicz, *The Third Reich and the Arab East* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 54.

14. Information from Gerhard Damm, Zeesen. According to Arsenian and Melka, Zeesen's Arabic service in fact began broadcasting at the start of 1938.

15. Nevill Barbour, "Broadcasting to the Arab World: Arabic Transmissions from the BBC and Other Non-Arab Stations," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 5, Winter 1951, p. 65. Emir Abdallah, the ruler of Transjordan, was murdered in 1951 by one of the Mufti's thugs for trying to reach an understanding with Israel.

16. Gensicke, *Der Mufti*, p. 171.

17. Speech by the Mufti to the imams of the Bosnian SS Division, cited in Gensicke, *ibid.*, p. 207.

18. See Bernard Lewis, *Semites and Anti-Semites* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1986), p. 122.

19. This speech of the Mufti's on the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration is reprinted in Gerhard Höpp, ed., *Mufti-Papiere. Briefe, Memoranden, Reden und Aufrufe Amin al-Husainis aus dem Exil, 1940-1945* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2001), pp. 192 (German). The quotation from the Koran is from the 82nd verse of the fifth Sura. The pamphlet "Islam and Judentum" can be found in Thomas Casagrande, *Die Volksdeutsche SS-Division "Prinz Eugen"* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2003), p. 333 (German).

20. Uri M. Kupferschmidt, *The Supreme Muslim Council: Islam under the British Mandate for Palestine* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987), pp. 249, 252.

21. On Izz al-Din al-Qassam, see Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*, pp. 133. In November 1935, al-Qassam became the first victim of the death cult he promoted when he was killed in a skirmish with the British, and has since been revered as a martyr.

22. Davis Thomas Schiller, *Palästinenser zwischen Terrorismus und Diplomatie* (Munich: Bernard & Graefe Verlag, 1982), p. 123. (German).

23. According to Klaus Gensicke in his important study, *Der Mufti*, pp. 233. The most detailed accounts of the uprising are to be found in Schiller, *Palästinenser*, and Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*.

24. Kurt Fischer-Weth, *Amin el-Husseini. Grossmufti von Palästina* (Berlin: Walter Titz Verlag, 1943), p. 83. How the kaffiyah, which was permanently worn by Arafat, could become the badge of identity of today's "progressives" deserves a study of its own.

25. Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*, p. 250.

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 183. After the failed British attempt to arrest el-Husseini in July 1937, he fled in October to Beirut from where, with a few hundred acolytes who had come with him, he continued to direct the uprising. See Melka, *The Axis*, pp. 106.; Cohen, *Retreat*, p. 59.

27. Again in May 1939 British officials reported that "DNB agents are currently undertaking an intensive propaganda campaign in Palestine for a resumption of the rebellion in alliance with the Husseini circle." DNB agents had stated "that huge sums of money were available to ensure that the rebellion continued and that machine guns have been brought into the country for the rebellion." Balke, *Die Landesgruppe*, pp. 205, 207.

28. Alfred Rosenberg, "Die Judenfrage im Weltkampf," in Alfred Rosenberg, *Tradition und Gegenwart, Reden und Aufsätze 1936-1940, Blut und Ehre*, IV. Band (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1943), p. 208 (German).

29. Abd Al-Fattah Muhammad El-Awaisi, *The Muslim Brotherhood and the Palestinian Question 1928-1947* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1998), p. 98. For the links between the Islamism of the 1930s and that of the present day, see Matthias Küntzel, *Djihad und Judenhass* (Freiburg: ca ira-Verlag, 2002) (German).

30. Gudrun Krämer, *Minderheit, Millet, Nation? Die Juden in Ägypten 1914-1952* (Wiesbaden: Verlag Otto Harrassowitz, 1982), p. 278 (German). Since 1926, Alfred Hess, brother of Hitler's deputy-to-be, had been building up the NSDAP group in Egypt. See Küntzel, *Djihad*, pp. 26.

31. Krämer, *Minderheit*, pp. 290.; El-Awaisi, *Muslim Brotherhood*, pp. 39, 70, 92; Porath, *Palestinian Arab National Movement*, p. 199. On the resistance that this campaign at first

encountered even in clerical circles, see Küntzel, *Djihad*, pp. 30.

32. Giseler Wirsing, *Engländer, Juden, Araber, in Palästina*, 5th rev. ed. (Leipzig: Eugen Diederichs Verlag, 1942), pp. 136 (German). Wirsing visited Egypt and Palestine in 1936 and 1939 on behalf of the SS. See Otto Köhler, *Unheimliche Publizisten* (Munich: Droemer-sche Verlagsanstalt Th. Knaur Nachf., 1995), pp. 290 (German). Salafism (*as-salaf as-salih* means "the pious forefathers") is the term used for the ideal of a return to the early Islam of the seventh century advocated by figures such as Hassan al-Banna and Izz al-Din al-Qassam.

33. Brynjar Lia, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt* (Reading: Ithaca Press, 1988), p. 175. The British secret service officer Seth Arsenian confirms this information: "Nazi agents also paid subversive groups, such as...the Ikhwan al-Muslimun in Egypt, to run propaganda against the British in Palestine" (Ikhwan al-Muslimun: Arab term for the Muslim Brothers). See Arsenian, "Wartime Propaganda," p. 425.

34. Lia, *Society of the Muslim Brothers*, pp. 80, 180. The issue of the reciprocal contacts between Nazis and Muslim Brothers in the Second World War lies outside the scope of this article. On this matter, see, *inter alia*, John W. Eppler, *Rommel ruft Cairo* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1959), p. 165 (German).

35. On the moderate tendencies, see Küntzel, *Djihad*, pp. 15, 24, 41, 54. That Islamist anti-modernism is not automatically associated with the identity-based "The Jews are our misfortune" fantasy is shown by the example of the Islamist movement formed at the same time in Southeast Asia. The force behind this movement, Ala Maududi, was certainly antiliberal and antifeminist, but he did not adopt anti-Jewish conspiracy theories. See Martin Riexinger, "Allahs Kader," *taz-Magazin*, 24 January 2004 (German).

36. Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (Munich: Piper Verlag, 1986), p. 81 (German).

37. Cited in Middle East Research Institute (MEMRI), report no. 375, 3 May 2002. On Holocaust denial as a component of average Arab consciousness, see Küntzel, *Djihad*, pp. 51, 116.

38. Speech on the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, 2 November 1943, cited in Höpp, *Mufti-Papiere*, p. 197.

39. In 1943, the Mufti successfully prevented the implementation of a decision by the governments of Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary, which at that time wished to allow several thousand Jewish children to emigrate to Israel. Instead of this, urged the Mufti, they should be "sent where they will be under closer control, for example to Poland." See Höpp, *Mufti-Papiere*, p. 164. 40. Daphne Trevor, *Under the White Paper* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Press, 1948), pp. 206. See also Gensicke, *Der Mufti*, pp. 251; Küntzel, *Djihad*, pp. 48, 146.

41. According to Lewis, *Semites*, p. 160, and Simon Wiesenthal, *Grossmufti - der Grossagent der Achse* (Vienna: Reid Verlag, 1947), p. 2 (German).

42. On 29 November 1947 the UN General Assembly decided to divide Palestine into a Jewish state (56% of the Mandate territory with 500,000 Jews and 500,000 Arab inhabitants) and an Arab state (43% of the territory with 750,000 Arabs and 10,000 Jews) and place Jerusalem under international control.

43. El-Awaisi, *Muslim Brotherhood*, p. 195; Bethell, *Das Palästina*, p. 381.

44. Küntzel, *Djihad*, p. 46. In 1948, after el-Husseini had been appointed chairman of the Muslim Brothers in Palestine and the deputy of Hassan al-Banna, *The Magazine of the Year* wrote, "...about one in every ten Arabs is a follower of the Mufti, and...it is unwise to criticize Haj Amin in public." See Gensicke, *Der Mufti*, p. 143. This was also the view of the Egyptian premier, Sidqi Pasha, who had initially supported the Partition Plan. This instrumental reason, which today seems to us like a relic of a distant past, was documented in 1947 by the responsible representative of the Jewish Agency for the Arab world, Eliyahu Sasson: "According to Sasson's report, the prime minister repeatedly stressed that he is a businessman. He is neither pro-Jewish nor pro-Arab. He looks out for the welfare of Egypt. If that dictates Jewish-Arab understanding, so be it." Cited in Michael Doran, *Pan-Arabism before Nasser* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 99.

45. Küntzel, *Djihad*, pp. 70.

46. Qutb's text was written in 1950, but could not gain acceptance in the period of Nasser's bloody suppression of the Muslim Brotherhood, to which Qutb himself fell victim by hanging. See Ronald L. Nettler, "Past Trials and Present Tribulations: A Muslim Fundamentalist Speaks on the Jews," in Michael Curtis, ed., *Antisemitism in the Contemporary World* (London: Westview Press, 1986), pp. 99.

47. This claim is found, for example, in the standard work on *The People of Israel in the Ko-*

ran and the Sunna by the most famous Sunni spiritual authority of today and Grand Imam of the Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Mohammed Tantawi, which he presented as a doctoral thesis and was published in 1968- 69. See Wolfgang Driesch, *Islam, Judentum und Israel* (Hamburg: Deutsches Orient-Institut, Mitteilungen 66, 2003), pp. 53, 74. The most recent edition of this bestseller appeared in 1997.

48. Joseph Croitoru, *Der Märtyrer als Waffe* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2003), p. 130, pp. 165 (German).

49. "Antisemitismus in Wandel. Ein Gespräch mit Alain Finkielkraut," *FAZ*, Vol. 12, November 2003 (German).

50. In contrast to their European competitors, U.S. firms such as Pepsi, Coke, and Western Union ceased their involvement with Al-Manar following protests. See Jorisch, "Al-Manar."

51. Rausing, "Frequenzen des Hasses," p. 50.

52. Christian Henderson, "Conference Aims to Take Heads out of the Sand," *Daily Star*, 18 February 2004; Markus Bickel, "Reden und lassen reden," *taz*, 24 February 2004. The German government was involved in the planning and evaluation of this conference, as is clear from a letter sent by Chancellor Schröder's senior foreign policy adviser, Bernd Mützelburg, to the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Paris on 6 April 2004. The aim of the conference, according to Mützelburg, was "to test the capacity of political Islam for dialogue." However, the German government had come to the conclusion that in Beirut they had not yet reached their goal of "contributing to an honest and critical dialogue with members of political Islam" (Simon Wiesenthal Center press release, 14 April 2004).

53. Udo Steinbach, "Der Nahe Osten in der deutschen Aussenpolitik," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, B 12/98, p. 27 (German).

54. Among the participants in the conference were Social Democratic MP Christoph Zöpel (between 1999 and 2002 a minister of state in the Foreign Office and currently spokesperson for the SPD's Middle East Dialogue Parliamentary Group), Michael Lüders and Helga Baumgarten (Middle East experts), Volker Perthes (from the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik think tank), AndräGärber (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung), Manfred Kropp (Deutsches Orient-Institut Beirut), and Friedemann Büttner (FU Berlin).

55. "In the Israeli-occupied territories," declared the most prominent of the German participants, Christoph Zöpel, "force is used on a daily basis," as a result of which Hizbollah also thinks in terms of "changing the situation through the use of force." See "Die Hizbollah ist eine Kraft unter vielen," interview with Christoph Zöpel in *JungleWorld*, 25 February 2004 (German). On the relationship between Islamic anti-Semitism and Israeli policy, see Matthias Küntzel, "The Roots of Delusion," on the website www.matthiaskuentzel.de.

56. Leon Poliakov, *Vom Antizionismus zum Anti-Semitismus* (Freiburg: ca ira- Verlag, 1992), p. 104 (German).

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