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Islamic Antisemitism And Its Nazi Roots¹

What kind of ideology pushed the 9/11 perpetrators into acting the way they did? Information from the first trial, of a core member of the Hamburg al Qaida cell which took place between October 2002 and February 2003 in Hamburg, Germany gives a crucial answer to this question.

The accused, Mounir el Motassadeq, had been a close friend of Mohammed Atta, the ringleader of the 9/11 perpetrators. He had held in trust the bank account of Marwan al-Shehhi who had steered the plane into the second Twin Tower. The testimony of many of the witnesses presented a breath-taking insight into the perpetrators' minds but the international media paid scant attention to their revealing testimony.

One witness, Shahid Nickels, a member of Mohammed Atta's core group between 1998 and 2000, said the following: "Atta's *weltanschauung* was based on a National Socialist way of thinking. He was convinced that 'the Jews' are determined to achieve world domination. He considered New York City to be the center of world Jewry which was, in his opinion, Enemy Number One."

Sharid Nickels further testified about the perpetrator's core group: "They were convinced that Jews control the American government as well as the media and the economy of the United States. ... Motassadeq shared Atta's attitude in believing that a

world-wide conspiracy of Jews exists. According to him, Americans want to dominate the world so that Jews can pile up capital.”

Another witness, Ahmed Maglad, who frequently joined the group’s meetings, testified: “For us, Israel didn’t have any right to exist as a state. ... We believed that German and French policies were designed to suit Arab countries whereas the USA is considered to be the mother of Israel.” Finally, Ralf Götsche who lived in the same student dormitory with the accused, recalled: “Motassadeq once said: ‘What Hitler did to the Jews was not at all bad.’ Motassadeq’s attitude was blatantly antisemitic”.²

Recognizing this obsessive hatred of Jews enables us to draw a preliminary conclusion: The concept of Americans as enemies which motivated the 9/11 perpetrators is clearly not based on sound or even a partially reasonable perception of reality but is an obvious phantasmagoria and reveals an antisemitism which strikingly parallels several central concepts of Nazi ideology. This essay will investigate the specifics of this antisemitism by exposing its history, its meaning and its specific dangers. First: I will give a brief overview of the historical roots of Islamism. Second: I will explore its meaning by analyzing how Jews are perceived by Islamists. Third: I will point to the current dangers which Islamism represents in the post cold war order as well as in the future. Before proceeding I would like to emphasize two points:

- 1) Probing into the minds and motives of Islamist perpetrators should not lead us to attribute ‘murder in the name of jihad’ to Islam as a whole. Instead, we should only attribute this particular kind of jihad to *Islamism* as a separate political tendency within Islam. It is critical to make this distinction so as to be able to pointedly criticize Islamism and to avoid, at the same time, any hint of a racist discourse.
- 2) Probing the minds and motives of Islamist perpetrators requires that we avoid using our Western understanding of the world. If we stick exclusively to our Western modes of reasoning – such as the law of cause-and-effect or the importance we place on the survival instinct – this may lead to the mistaken belief that hopelessness and deep desperation are at the root of murder-suicide. Under close inspection, however, this reasoning does not hold up. There are many people in the world who have every reason to feel desperate about their wretched and indeed hopeless lives. None of them, however, resort to killing people by entering overcrowded buses or by hijacking planes with the sole purpose of blowing themselves up with the intention of killing as many innocent people as possible. This is definitely not a method of how people respond to misery. By studying the testamentary videos which so-called ‘Palestinian martyrs’ produce before setting off on their deadly missions, we will find no evidence of desperation or hopelessness but will instead find an enormous amount of

pride and even joy, a joy close to rapture. Thus, the motives of the perpetrators can be explained neither by applying our theories of cause-and-effect, nor can the motives be attributed to ‘evil-doers’. These men do not consider themselves as evil, but see themselves instead as being courageous liberators and as the God-fearing avant-garde of the best. Probing into the minds of Islamist perpetrators, therefore, requires our readiness to take literally and seriously a *weltanschauung* which seems alien and even bordering on madness to us.

History

In order to understand what the similarities between Islamist and Nazi imaginations are based on, we have to look at the history of Egypt’s *Muslim Brotherhood* which was founded in 1928 and which established Islamism as a mass movement.

The continuing significance of the *Muslim Brotherhood* for Islamism is comparable to the significance of the Bolshevik party for Communism in the 20th century: The *Muslim Brotherhood* is the organizational as well as the ideological core which successfully inspired all subsequent Islamist groups and tendencies. No other organization has influenced the ideology of the al Qaida cadres more strongly than the *Brotherhood* and its leading members Hassan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb and Abdullah Azzam have.

In addition, the *Moslem Brotherhood* has been the organization which first created the concept of a belligerent *jihad* for our modern times and which turned the longing for death into an Islamic ideal . This is of particular importance, since Islamism stands for a fundamentalist understanding of Islam combined with the explicit purpose of creating a belligerent *jihad*. As early as 1938, Hassan al-Banna, the charismatic founder of the *Brotherhood*, presented his own version of *jihad* in an essay called “The industry of death”. In this article, he did not describe the horror of death but instead depicted death as an ideal to long for. Hassan al-Banna wrote: “To a nation that perfects the industry of death and which knows how to die nobly, God gives proud life in this world and eternal grace in the life to come.”³

The concept of belligerent *jihad* was welcome with enthusiasm by the “Troops of God” as the *Brotherhood* referred to itself.

Whenever their battalions marched down the boulevards of Cairo in semi-fascist formation, they sang: “We are not afraid of death, we desire it... Let us die in redemption for Muslims.” This particular interpretation of the meaning of *jihad* did not come about until the 1930’s. It should be noted that its concurrence with the arrival of a newly virulent antisemitism is verified in no uncertain terms.

Originally, the British colonial policies triggered the call for a Sharia-based new order and produced Islamism as a social movement and as a means of resisting “cultural modernity”. But the *Brotherhood* did not conduct its *jihad* primarily against the

British, against the French or against the Egyptian elite who had collaborated with the British. Instead, up to 1951 the *jihad* movement of the *Brotherhood* was almost exclusively focused on Zionism and Jews.

While the membership of the *Brotherhood* had been eight hundred in May 1936, by August 1938 it had increased to an amazing two hundred thousand - not counting its many non-member supporters.⁴ However, in these two years only one large campaign took place in Egypt which exclusively targeted Zionism and the Jews.

The campaign itself was initiated by the so-called “Arab Revolt” in Palestine which the notorious Mufti of Jerusalem, Amin el-Husseini, had incited. “Down with the Jews!” – “Jews get out of Egypt and Palestine!” were the slogans of the mass demonstrations which the *Brotherhood* organized in Egyptian cities in 1936. Their leaflets called for a boycott of Jewish goods and Jewish shops. Their newspaper *al-Nadhir* published a regular column called “The danger of the Jews of Egypt”. They also published the names and addresses of Jewish businessmen and the publishers of allegedly Jewish newspapers all over the world, attributing every evil – from communism to prostitution – to the “Jewish menace.”⁵

Obviously, many of their actions as well as the rhetoric and the slogans used in this antisemitic campaign were clearly taken over from Nazi Germany. The *Brotherhood*, however, included Islamic roots of hatred against Jews as well. They used and disseminated a quotation from the Koran that Jews are to be considered ‘the

worst enemy of the believers.’ In addition, they evoked old stories of the early history of Islam by pointing to the example set by Mohammed who, as legend has it, succeeded not only in expelling two Jewish tribes from Medina during the 7th century, but killed the entire male population of the third tribe and sold all the women and children into slavery. And they stressed (and still consider) Palestine as an Islamic territory (“Dar al-Islam”) where Jews should never be allowed to govern a single village let alone an entire state.

Indeed, most decisively in contributing to and in shaping these first anti-Jewish rallies in Egypt’s history was the status quo as well as the presence of one man in Palestine. The Mufti of Jerusalem, Amin el-Husseini, who later became infamous for his collaboration with Germany’s Nazi government had held the highest political and religious posts in Palestine since 1921. There was nobody who instigated the conflict between Muslims and Jews in Palestine more successfully than did this Mufti. As early as 1929, a Mufti-led pogrom killed 133 autochthonous Jews in Jerusalem and Hebron. Shortly thereafter, the Mufti declared the relentless fight against the Jews as the most important responsibility of all believers. Those who dared to resist his anti-Jewish orders were publicly denounced and publicly threatened in the mosques during Friday prayers.

Nevertheless, the Mufti had to deal with powerful adversaries such as the clan of the Nashashibis and the Christian minority in Palestine. In contrast to the Mufti, the Nashashibis tried to get

along with Jews as well as with the British in a more pragmatic way by negotiating rather than by engaging in fighting and killing.⁶ The controversy between the Husseini clan and the Nashashibis came to a head during the “Arab Revolt” of 1936 which had at its goal to put a complete stop to Jewish immigration. This particular revolt was “a major turning point in the modern, and ultimately tragic history of Palestine, of Zionism and of the Middle East,” as Aaron S. Klieman wrote, because it created and substantially shaped the developing movement of Islamism.⁷

The Mufti used this uprising to get rid of all those Palestinians who disagreed with him and who were willing to negotiate with Jews. The German scholar Abraham Ashkenasi writes: “The Mufti killed his opponents within the Palestinian camp with extreme cruelty. There was more murder and manslaughter *within* the Palestinian camp than against the Jews or against the British.”⁸ It is noteworthy that the very first Islamist reign of terror was established in those territories of Palestine which the Mufti controlled during the revolt. Palestinians who did not abide by the Mufti’s anti-Western dress code or who did not strictly obey the Sharia law, were immediately and ruthlessly killed.⁹

Finally, the Mufti used this revolt to make the Palestine issue the focal point of the Arab world as a whole for the first time in Middle East history. In a letter to Adolf Hitler, the Mufti emphasized his unflagging and successful efforts to use the “the Palestine question” in order “to coalesce all Arab countries in a common hatred against the British and the Jews.”¹⁰ Nowhere, however, had the hatred against Jews become more deeply

entrenched than in Egypt where the *Muslim Brothers* called on the Palestinians to kill the Nashashibis in the name of God and who mobilized the masses in support of the Mufti against Jews.

I would like to point out that the Mufti's so-called "Arab Revolt" took place against the background of the swastika: Arab leaflets and signs on walls were prominently marked with this Nazi symbol; the youth organization of the Mufti's political party paraded as "Nazi-scouts", and Arab children greeted each other with the Nazi salute. Those who had to pass through the rebellious quarters of Palestine attached a flag bearing the swastika to their vehicles so as to insure protection against assaults by the Mufti's volunteers.¹¹

Starting in 1933, the Mufti repeatedly offered to serve the German Nazi government. In the beginning, however, the Mufti's fight against Jews was supported in terms of ideology alone. It was not until 1937 that the Mufti's "Holy War" received substantive support from Nazi Germany in the form of financial assistance and the shipment of weapons. Klaus Gensicke writes in his dissertation on the Mufti's collaboration with the Nazis: "The Mufti himself admitted that it was entirely due to the money contributed by the Germans that allowed him at that time to carry out the uprising in Palestine."¹² Thus, Hitler's agents incited the anti-Jewish hatred of the Islamists in Palestine with slogans, weapons and money thereby encouraging the *Muslim Brotherhood* in Egypt.

It was not until May 8, 1945, however, that the ideological approach between the Mufti, the *Muslim Brothers* and the Nazis reached its peak. This became obvious as early as November 1945. During this very month, the *Muslim Brothers* committed the worst anti-Jewish pogroms in all of Egypt's history: The core of antisemitism had thus begun to shift from Germany to the Arab world.

On the anniversary of the Balfour-declaration, demonstrators rampaged the Jewish quarters of Cairo. They plundered houses and shops, attacked non-Muslims, devastated the synagogues and then set them on fire. Six people were killed, several hundred more were injured. The Islamist's newspapers attacked Egyptian Jews by slandering them as Zionists, Communists, capitalists and bloodsuckers, as traffickers in women and as merchants of war, as subversive elements in all countries and in all societies.¹³

One year later, in 1946, the *Brotherhood* made sure that the Mufti Amin el-Husseini who had become a close friend of Heinrich Himmler, was granted asylum and was given a new political domain in Egypt. Since 1945, the Mufti of Jerusalem had been searched for as a war criminal by Yugoslavia as well as by Great Britain. France, however, where he had been kept in comfortable so-called 'custody', rejected all demands for extradition. With the support of the *Brotherhood* the Mufti managed to escape in disguise in May 1946. After arriving in Egypt, the Mufti was declared al-Banna's official representative and personal supervisor of the *Brotherhood's* activities in Palestine. "By virtue of his nomination as the Brotherhood's local leader in Palestine, the Mufti continued to

be recognised as the national leader by most of the Palestinian Arab population.”¹⁴

Let’s keep in mind that the Mufti, had revealed himself as the most ardent Arab supporter of the annihilation of European Jews. during World War II. Therefore, granting this prominent Islamic figure amnesty, was consequently seen in most of the Arab world as explicit acceptance of his antisemitic attitude and of his antisemitic actions. From this point on, as Bernard Lewis put it, “a pro-Nazi past was a source of pride, not shame”.¹⁵

The powerful collaboration of the *Muslim Brothers* with the Mufti and the pogroms against Jews a few months after the world learned about Auschwitz clearly showed that the *Brotherhood* either ignored or even justified Hitler’s extermination of European Jews. The consequences of this attitude, however, continue to be far-reaching and characterize the Arabic-Jewish conflict to this day. How then did Islamists in 1947 explain to themselves international support of the creation of Israel? By completely ignoring the murder of six million European Jews by Nazi Germany, they reverted to antisemitic conspiracy theories. In this vein, the *Brotherhood* considered the UN-decision of 1947 to partition Palestine to be an “international plot carried out by the Americans, the Russians and the British, under the influence of Zionism.”¹⁶ Shortly after the liberation of Auschwitz and the recognition that most of European Jews had been too powerless to prevent their murder, the Islamists branded Jews as the true world-ruling power. The Nazi belief in a world-wide Jewish conspiracy had not only survived the collapse of the Hitler regime,

but was eagerly adopted in 1947 in an Arabic world where the *Muslim Brotherhood* had by now succeeded in mustering a million supporters.

Tens of thousands of Arab copies of one of the most repugnant anti-Jewish publication, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, were published in the following decades by two well-known former members of the *Muslim Brotherhood*, Gamal Abdel Nasser and Anwar al-Sadat.¹⁷ Hundreds of thousands copies of the essay by Sayyid Qutb *Our struggle with the Jews* written in 1950, were distributed throughout the Muslim World in the aftermath of the 1967 Six-days-war.

The new impact of the Nazi-like conspiracy theories becomes particularly obvious if we take a look at the *Charta* of the Muslim Brotherhood of Palestine which calls itself *Hamas*. This *Charta*, created in 1988, represents one of the most important Islamist programs of today. Here, *Hamas* pointedly makes use of the antisemitic rhetoric of the Mufti of Jerusalem which he in turn had adopted from the Nazis. The Brotherhood of Palestine defines itself as a “universal movement” whose *jihad* was “the spearhead and the avant-garde” in their struggle against “world Zionism”. The *charta* clearly indicates that they were heavily influenced by the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. According to this *Charta* “the Jews were behind the French Revolution as well as the Communist Revolutions.” They were “behind World War I so as to wipe out the Islamic Caliphate ... and also were behind World War II, where they collected immense benefits from trading in war

materials and prepared for the establishment of their state.” They “inspired the establishment of the United Nations and the Security Council ... in order to rule the world through their intermediaries. There was no war anywhere without their [the Jews’] fingerprints on them.” The original text of this *Charta* is clearly stated in Article 32: The intentions of the Zionists “has been laid out in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and their present conduct is the best proof of what is said there.”¹⁸

It is tempting to ridicule this distorted ideology as lunacy, just like Hitler’s jabbering was ridiculed in the past. But let’s remember the history of European antisemitism in the years before World War II. Isn’t this precisely the story of how a grossly delusional view of the world, based on infantile fears and ancient hatreds, led to denigration, torture and murder of such magnitude that it still strains our imagination? As the renowned scholar of antisemitism, Jehuda Bauer, says: “The language of Islamism is plainly and clearly a genocidal one. They are striving for a repetition of the mass murder of Jews .That’s written down black on white.”¹⁹

It is indeed this insane picture of Jews as the evil ones and as the villains of the world which is at the root of the mass-murder of civilians in Israel and in the USA. By committing their murderous operations against people who they consider to be Jews, Islamists in their own understanding do not commit crimes but acts of liberation for which God will reward them in heaven. This is the reason why the testamentary videos of Palestinian Islamists do not express desperation but express instead pride and even joy.

With this background in mind, it shouldn't surprise us that witnesses in the trial of Motassadeq in Hamburg, Germany, testified to the existence of antisemitism and Mohammed Atta's belief in Nazi concepts. Should it further surprise us that Osama bin Laden accuses "the Jews" of "holding America and the West hostage" given the fact, that the founder of *Hamas*, the Palestinian Abdullah Azzam, was at the same time the most important teacher and patron of al Qaida's leader?²⁰ With the Islamists' delusional perception of the "enemy" in mind, let's look at their delusional image of utopia.

Meaning

Why are the Islamists so singlemindedly focused on Jews or, more specifically, on their hatred of Jews? Again, Palestine's history will provide an answer - though not in the popular sense by putting the blame on Zionist policy.

It is a well known fact that antisemitic ideologists from the very beginning have identified Jews with the threatening aspects of modern times. Not surprisingly, these ideologists did not hesitate to distort reality in order to justify their claims. In Palestine, however, the approach of modern life took place in quite a different way. Here, the correlation between the arrival of the Jews and the arrival of rapid modernization was not a fantasy but a fact. At the beginning of the 20th century when the immigration of Russian Jews took place, large parts of the Arab community in Palestine were still leading mostly pre-modern lives dominated by

patriarchy, the subordination of women, the strict loyalty to one's clan, and the unquestioning adherence to one's religion.

The Russian Jewish immigrants, however, including many Socialists, were embarking on quite another way of life. In Palestine, they personified the subversive and therefore threatening aspects of modern life such as secularisation, the individual pursuit of happiness, freethinking and the equality of women to most of the local population. There is hardly any other region in the world where such different life-styles and social ideas have clashed together at one place.

At first glance, the conflict between Zionism and anti-Zionism appears to deal primarily with the possession of land. On a deeper level, however, the acceptance or rejection of the modern world was at stake. At that time, not a few Arabs considered the modernising effects of Zionist immigration as favorable. During the 1920's, for example, prominent leaders in Egypt believed "that the progress of Zionism might help to secure the development of a new Eastern civilisation" as Mr. Kisch who was at that time Chairman of the Palestine Zionist Executive noted in his diary after visiting Cairo in 1924.²¹ In Palestine, the members of the Nashashibi family as well as parts of the Christian minority tended to lean toward this point of view. But the conservatism of the Mufti, supported by the *Muslim Brotherhood* as well as by the National Socialists in Germany, prevailed.

It is revealing how Giseler Wirsing, a leading German Nazi journalist and admirer of the Mufti, described this situation after

visiting Palestine on behalf of the SS in 1937 and 1939. “In Palestine, the capitalist way of thinking and living (as well as its Marxist equivalent) is exclusively embodied in Jewry.” However, as far as Islam is concerned, “the ideas of the West have not succeeded in casting doubt on the essence of the traditional way of life.” In Palestine, due to the rule of the Mufti, “the breakthrough of liberalistic ideas has barely taken place. Apparently, for those ideas, only the Nashashibis family would have been suitable, and for this reason ... they received support from England, in particular.”²²

During the course of the “Arab Revolt” which caused a turning point in the history of Palestine, the defeat of the Nashashibis and the birth of Islamism coincided. There is no doubt that this outcome of the revolt has proven to be catastrophic for the entire Arab world. Since then, hatred of Jews has been whipped up relentlessly, because Jews represented the danger of threatening change, and resistance against modernization was multiplied because change itself was seen as being quintessentially Jewish.

This antisemitic distortion of facts has spread throughout the entire Arab world and has more or less impeded its development to the present day. It is against this background that the rapid proliferation of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in this region is taking place.

The wording of these *Protocols* is primarily directed against any influence of Liberalism by depicting it as a secret tool of the Jews. Consequently, this book, fabricated by the secret agents of the

Tsar in the 1890s, is distributed by the royal successors of Ibn Saud, to this day.²³

Why did Osama bin Laden's *Letter to the American people* of October 2002 accuse the United States of being "the worst civilization witnessed in the history of mankind"? Osama bin Laden himself provides the answer: "Because you are the nation who, rather than ruling by the Shariah of Allah in its Constitution and Laws, have chosen to invent your own laws as your will and desire." The core reason behind any Islamic attack is the accusation of propagating heresy which is seen by giving people political and personal freedom.

In order to make a better case against the freedom of the individual, Islamists connect it to a Jewish conspiracy. In his *Letter to the American people* bin Laden continued: "The Jews have taken control of your economy, through which they have then taken control of your media, and they now control all aspects of your life - making you their servants and achieving their aims at your expense." The means of this allegedly Jewish control and infiltration are, according to bin Laden's letter, "the immoral acts of fornication, homosexuality, intoxicants, gambling, and trading with interest."²⁴

This may sound like madness to most of us. For Islamists, however, it is precisely this mission of purification and salvation which provides the eliminatory ingredient of Islamic antisemitism. The hatred of Jews as a hatred against the challenges of modern life is the underlying reason why innocent people were killed on 9/11 - Islamists consider New York City to be the center

of World Jewry, as was clearly corroborated at the Hamburg trial of Motassadeq.

The Islamist's distorted image of *themselves* is shaped by claiming superiority and dominance over the rest of the world. According to a statement of al Qaida's spokesman, Suleiman Abu Gheith, the Muslim nation "was created to stand at the center ... of hegemony and rule" for it is "the divine rule ..., that the entire earth must be subject to the religion of Allah."²⁵ Their characteristic trait is their hatred of accepting distinct differences. The "humane" has been developed in the course of centuries by accepting and valuing distinctions, and the acknowledgement of equality between women and men has always been the starting point of that acceptance. The utopia of Islamism, however, is aimed at revoking acceptance of differences so as to extinguish individuality and to submit everybody to the binding force of the clan and their religion again.

The Islamists' distorted image of the *enemy* is directed at civilizations which do not believe that real life only starts after death, and who instead value life here on earth thus thwarting the Islamists' belief of eternal justice by employing such "perfidious" means as reason and doubt, engaging in fornication and by changing the ancient structure of the family.

It is precisely this combination of the Islamists' image of themselves and their distorted image of the enemy which has resulted in such an insane mission, namely the annihilation of evil - and this evil is mostly declared as being Jewish - in order to purify society and to save mankind. It is this mission that creates a hatred of evil that exceeds the fear of death itself.

Just like National Socialism was propelled by a utopia which advocated salvation through destruction, Islamism is propelled forward by a similar utopia. In both cases, it is the distorted image of a perceived enemy which provides the perpetrator with his own identity. In both cases, the annihilation of evil is considered to be the precondition for the realization of an idealized dream of homogeneity. In both cases this evil is projected onto 'the Jew'.

Dangers

There is an underlying connection between 9/11/2001 - the al Qaida attack – and 11/9/1989 – the fall of the Berlin Wall which has provided fertile ground to the powerful attraction of today's Islamism. Until 1989, capitalism was criticized not only by Islamists but more relevantly by the Soviet Union and her allies. Since 1990, however, Islamism is the only remaining movement that combines three critical ingredients: 1. a comprehensive ideology to challenge capitalist societies, 2. enormous financial resources, 3. global spreading..

Many people in the world have ample reason to be dissatisfied with their wretched conditions of life which are connected to the relentless law of the market economy throughout the world.

Islamism, however, is a world-wide rebellion which channels this discontent either against Israel, which is supposedly dominated by Americans, or against the United States, which is allegedly ruled by Jews. This particular movement does not fight under the flag of anti-colonialism but under the flag of antisemitism; it does not strive for

emancipation but for oppression; it is not ruled by a concept of reason, but by madness.

In spite of this, there is today no other anti-capitalist or anti-Western movement that is able to influence, to mobilize, to muster so many people. It should be noted that in the aftermath of 9/11, Islamists were extremely successful in elections in Bahrain, Morocco and Pakistan.²⁶ The result of a poll of 38,000 people in 44 Islamic countries, which was conducted in the summer of 2002, presented a frightening picture: More than 25 per cent of the people polled in Ghana, Indonesia, Senegal and Uganda said that suicide bombing was justifiable as a means to defend Islam; more than 33 per cent in Pakistan and Mali said the same; more than 40 per cent in Jordan, Bangladesh and Nigeria agreed; and so did more than 50 per cent in the Ivory Coast; and 73 per cent in Lebanon.²⁷

It was precisely 9/11 which has given the Islamists this enormous boost. But that is not all. The burning towers of the World Trade Center turned out to be the sign of fire which announced “the reawakening of antisemitism in its new globalized form.”²⁸

In the spring of 2002, two million people participated in mass demonstrations which took place in every Arab capital in favor of *Hamas* suicide bombings. In Europe, at the same time, we witnessed the most severe antisemite riots against Jewish life since Germany’s *Reichskristallnacht* of 1938.

This antisemitism was enthusiastically adopted by Nazi-oriented organizations throughout the world who openly expressed joy at the destruction of the World Trade Center and the death of thousands

of innocent civilians. These people are attempting to make formal alliances with the Islamists. Informally, however, the anti-Jewish sentiment is more and more becoming the cement of a new coalition which includes huge parts of the contemporary Left, who do not loathe Israel and Jews for racist or religious reasons, but for so-called 'universalist' ones. Over the centuries, antisemitism has continually mutated into new forms. Now it seems to change again, into a shape which requires a new way of thinking and a new vocabulary. The movement against globalization, for instance, appears to degenerate into a breeding ground for a modern version of antisemitism. Their activists wear T-shirts printed with "Burn, Israel, Burn" without any awareness of breaking a taboo, *because they are on the Left*.²⁹ The present mutation claims that the worst crimes of antisemites in the past are now attributed to Jews and the state of Israel, so that if you are against Nazism, you must ipso facto be opposed to Jews. As Melanie Phillips accurately wrote: "This has produced an Orwellian situation in which hatred of the Jews now marches behind the Left's banner of anti-racism and human rights, giving rise even to mainstream articles discussing the malign power of the Jews over America and world policy."³⁰

Conspiracy theories have clearly gone beyond the adherents of Islamism. In France, a book claiming that no plane crashed into the Pentagon, became a best-seller. In Germany, a similar book claims that 9/11 was nothing more than a secret maneuver of the CIA. An example: "If George W. Bush, his father, other important decision-makers and top bankers are the members of an elitist secret lodge which had armed Hitler and Stalin and had thus provoked World

War II, then it seems only logical that they are having a hand in preparing for World War III as well.”³¹ This book, which turns historic facts upside down, went through 28 editions within five months. It was written by a former editor of the Green Party-oriented daily newspaper, the “Tageszeitung” or “taz” as it is known in Germany, and was published by a left-wing publishing house.

The above is obviously the German version of the well-known lie about the 4000 Jews who thanks to having been informed by the Mossad beforehand, allegedly did not go to work at the WTC on 9/11. This lie which originated in the Middle East and is based on theories from the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* was spread around the world at breakneck speed right after 9/11. For the first time, an event of enormous global relevance was interpreted in a blatantly antisemitic way and has been sold successfully as fact. As if being steered by the invisible hands of an al Qaida leader, the 9 /11 catastrophe contributed to serious damage of Israel’s image and blamed the United States for its own losses of human life.

In the United States it was apparently not an isolated case that pro-Israel students at San Francisco State University were confronted with a mob of students shouting “Hitler didn’t finish the job”.

According to the Anti-Defamation League, there were more than 100 antisemitic incidents on America’s campuses between January and May 2002. Students and faculty at a growing number of universities are joining in a rising movement to pressure colleges into divesting themselves of holdings in companies that do business with and in Israel³², whereas nobody seems to be concerned about those

companies that do business in Iran and Syria and did business in Iraq.

Antisemitism is a disease with no single cause. There seems to exist a deep-seated psychological need to discard the burden of German and European guilt about the Holocaust by defaming its victims posthumously. Others feel a pressing need to atone for European colonialism and imperialism by embracing Islamism and casting Israel as the world's worst colonial power. Elsewhere, antisemitism is gathering strength from all sorts of misplaced discontent and from resentments. As is amply documented, antisemitism doesn't need reasoned substance for its existence, because it is not based on opinions or on prejudice, but is part of an infrastructure of emotions which are the foundation of the antisemist's own distorted identity.

Thus, contrasting sharply with all the facts I have presented, we have to conclude that, although al Qaida's attack has its roots in antisemitism, this has not lead to wholesale condemnation of antisemitism in so-called civilized countries. Actually, the opposite is happening. At present, we are experiencing an unprecedented rise in antisemitism all over the world.

In the first part of this essay, I pointed out that from the very beginning Islamism and the hatred of Jews have been closely linked. It should follow that fighting Islamism demands zero-tolerance of antisemitism. If antisemitic propaganda and antisemitic acts would be made socially as well as politically unacceptable and would result in severe consequences, Islamism and Jihadism would loose its main impetus. In the second part, I discussed modernization and its relationship to Jews in the Middle East. Promoting democracy in this

region obviously requires a determined effort to combat antisemitism simultaneously. In the third part, I tried to explain the urgency for critical decisions to be made. As I mentioned in the beginning, we cannot use our Western modes of reasoning to comprehend Islamist ideology and suicide murder. However, we have to make use of our knowledge of Islamist's consciousness to combat a deadly irrationality and to draw an unassailable demarcation between a concept of change based on the traditions of the Enlightenment, and a concept of change that doesn't hesitate to utilise fascist means to destroy individuality and to prevent the development and emancipation of societies.

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¹ Some findings of this paper were first presented in my Keynote Address at the conference on "Genocide and Terrorism – Probing the Mind of the Perpetrator", April 11, 2003 at Yale University, New Haven. This conference was organized by the Genocide Studies Program of the Yale Center for International and Area Studies. I would like to offer my profound gratitude to Ursula Duba, New Haven, CT, USA and to R. Range Cloyd Jr., Hamburg, Germany for their dedication and for the time they were willing to give to make the English translation of this paper clear and concise.

² Christian Eggers, Aussagen in dem Prozess vor dem Hamburger Landgericht gegen Mounir El Motassadeq wegen Beihilfe zum Mord in über 3000 Fällen und Mitgliedschaft in einer terroristischen Vereinigung. (Unpublished) Fortunately, this journalist who works for Reuters took notes on all the witnesses statements.

³ Quoted from: Abd Al-Fattah Muhammad El-Awaisi, "The Muslim Brothers and the Palestine Question 1928-1947", London 1998, p. 125.

⁴ El-Awaisi, p.98.

⁵ Gudrun Krämer, "Minderheit, Millet, Nation? Die Juden in Ägypten 1914-1952", Wiesbaden 1982, p. 282; El-Awaisi, pp.70-71.

- ⁶ David Th. Schiller, "Palästinenser zwischen Terrorismus und Diplomatie. Die paramilitärische palästinensische Nationalbewegung von 1918 bis 1981", München 1982, pp.91-95.
- ⁷ Aaron S. Klieman, "The Arab States and Palestine", in: Elie Kedourie and Sylvia G. Haim (eds.), "Zionism and Arabism in Palestine and Israel", Frank Cass, London 1982, p.118.
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- ⁹ Kurth Fischer-Weth, "Amin el-Husseini. Großmufti von Palästina", Berlin 1943, pp.81-82; Schiller, pp.145-148.
- ¹⁰ Letter of January 20, 1941, see: Gerhard Höpp (ed.), "Mufti-Papiere. Briefe, Memoranden, Reden und Aufrufe Amin al-Husseinis aus dem Exil, 1940-1945", Berlin 2001, p.18.
- ¹¹ Ralf Paul Gerhard Balke, Die Landesgruppe der NSDAP in Palästina, Düsseldorf 1997, p. 260; Iwo Jordan, Araberaufstand. Erlebnisse und Dokumente aus Palästina, Wien-Leipzig 1943, p. 3, p.97, p. 187.
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- ¹⁶ El-Awaisi, p. 195.
- ¹⁷ Concerning the relationship between Nasser, Sadat, and the Muslim Brotherhood, see: Kirk J. Beattie, Egypt during the Nasser Years. Ideology, Politics and Civil Society, New York 1994, pp.47-49, p.57.
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www.palestinecenter.org/cpap/documents/charter.html
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- ²³ The German translation of the *Protocols* is published in: Jeffrey L. Sammons, Die Protokolle der Weisen von Zion – eine Fälschung. Text und Kommentar. Göttingen 1998.
- ²⁴ The full text of Osama bin Laden's letter was published in the British newspaper *The Observer*, November 24, 2002.
- ²⁵ "Why we fight America": Al-Qa'ida Spokesman Explains September 11 and Declares Intentions to Kill 4 Million Americans with Weapons of Mass Destruction, in: Special Dispatch of "The Middle East Media Research Institute" (MEMRI), June 18, 2002.
- ²⁶ In October 2002, the number of Islamists in Pakistan's parliament increased from three to fifty and they gained a majority of votes in two local states bordering on Afghanistan. In May 2002, Islamists in Bahrain won all parliamentary seats in local elections, in September 2002, Islamists in Morocco were more successful than any other political party. (See Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, September 30, 2002 and October 25, 2002.
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- ²⁸ Daniel Johah Goldhagen, The Globalization of Antisemitism, in: Forward, May 2003.
- ²⁹ See Gabriel Schoenfeld, "Israel and the Anti-Semites" in: Commentary, June 2002.
- ³⁰ Melanie Phillips, "The new nexus of antisemitism", first published in the Spectator, March 22, 2003 and Jonathan Sacks, "A New Antisemitism?": www.axt.org.uk/essays/sacks1.htm
- ³¹ Mathias Bröckers, "Verschwörungen, Verschwörungstheorien und die Geheimnisse des 11. 9.", 2001-Verlag, Frankfurt/M. 2002, p. 106.
- ³² Melissa Radler, "Anti-Semitic riot at San Francisco State University", in: Jerusalem Post, May 16, 2002; Michael A. Fletcher, "U.S. campuses divided by anti-Israel campaign", in: International Herald Tribune, October 14, 2002.