

**Matthias Küntzel**

## **Islamist terrorism and antisemitism: The mission against modernity<sup>1</sup>**

Earlier this month, a gunman entered the library of a religious school in Jerusalem, and murdered eight students. They were shot in cold blood at close range. Four of them were 15 or 16 years old. This massacre was a strike against the most prominent flagship institution of the religious Zionist world. It was at the same time the first terrorist attack on this scale in nearly two years – since a Tel Aviv suicide bomber killed nine in April 2006.

Most world leaders condemned this terrorist attack in the strongest of terms. However in other quarters, a different response found expression in shouts of joy. The perpetrator family's home was decorated with the flags of Hizbollah and Hamas, which issued a statement saying it "blesses the operation". Hamas radio broadcast called all supporters to "celebrate this victory". Mahmoud Abbas' official Palestinian Authority daily newspaper Al Hayat Al Jadida prominently placed a picture of the killer on the front page, with the laudatory caption, "The Shahid Alaa Abu D'heim." Gaza residents

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was first presented at Stanford University, Palo Alto, March 10, 2008 under the auspices of the University's Department of Comparative Literature, Scholars for Peace in the Middle East (SPME) and the Forum of Contemporary Europe at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies. I delivered this talk again in Santa Cruz (March 10, 2008, organized by SPME and the UCSC Jewish Studies Program), in Los Angeles (March 11, 2008 – with Robert Spencer, organized by SPME UCLA and the American Freedom Alliance), in Irvine (March 12, 2008 – organized by SPME UC Irvine), at a press event organized by "The Israel Project" on March 14, 2008 in New York, in Buffalo (March 18, organized by SPME and "Stand With Us"), at a conference of the American Enterprise Institute ("Anti-Semitism and the War on Terror") in Washington D.C. on March 19, 2008 (with Michael Ledeen and Michael Novak), at an event under the auspices of JINSA (The Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs) and "Holocaust Museum Watch" in Washington D.C. (March 19, 2008) at a lunch event of the Anti Defamation League in New York (March 21, 2008) and finally in the Cooper Union, New York (with Paul Berman and Fred Siegel; organized by Telos Press) on March 22, 2008.

went into mosques to perform the prayer of thanksgiving. Gaza's streets were filled with joyous crowds of thousands firing guns in the air in celebration, and passing out sweets to passersby.

For us, the laughing at the murder of young people who happened to be in school library constitutes the shocking violation of a taboo. It assumes that basic human instincts are extinguished and replaced by another system of morality and by another view of the world. The malice of such celebrations leads many people to turn away their eyes. I think our task is to do the opposite: To take even such detail of Islamist behaviour seriously and to seek to grasp the immanent logic behind.

Why do those people laugh and celebrate? Some say it is because of a somewhat understandable feeling of revenge for the Palestinians who died when Israel tried to stop the rocket fire from Gaza at the beginning of this month. Other voices, such as a commentator of the Jerusalem Post, say it is because the Palestinians do not like the idea of the Israeli state and therefore are "indoctrinating their people with a vicious intolerance of Jewish historical rights in this region." I have a different explanation, based on the argument of my book "Jihad and Jew-Hatred. Islamism, Nazism and the roots of 9/11".<sup>2</sup> The Islamists laugh and celebrate when they kill Jews because they really do like to see Jews butchered, because they are obsessed by a genocidal antisemitism and this murderous antisemitism has Nazi roots.

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<sup>2</sup> See: [www.telospress.com](http://www.telospress.com)

Please allow me to show you an example of contemporary Jew-hatred among Palestinians. Here are extracts from a Friday sermon given by Sheikh Ibrahim Mudeiris in May 2005 in Gaza:

*“Allah has tormented us with ,the people most hostile to the believers’ – the Jews. ... Allah warned his beloved Prophet Mohammad about the Jews, who had killed their prophets, forged their Torah, and sowed corruption throughout their history.*

*“With the establishment of the state of Israel, the entire Islamic nation was lost, because Israel is a cancer spreading through the body of the Islamic nation, and because the Jews are a virus resembling AIDS, from which the entire world suffers. You will find that the Jews were behind all the civil strife in this world. The Jews are behind the suffering of the nations. ...*

*“It was the Jews who provoked Nazism to wage war against the entire world, when the Jews, using the Zionist movement, got other countries to wage an economic war on Germany and to boycott German merchandise. They provoked Russia, Britain, France, and Italy. This enraged the Germans towards the Jews, leading to the events of those days, which the Jews commemorate today.*

*“But they are committing worse deeds than those done to them in the Nazi war. Yes, perhaps some of them were killed and some burned, but they are inflating this in order to win over the media and gain the world’s sympathy.*

*“We have ruled the world before, and by Allah, the day will come when we will rule the entire world again. The day will come when we will rule America. The day will come when we will rule Britain and the entire world – except for*

*the Jews. The Jews will not enjoy a life in tranquility under our rule, because they are treacherous by nature, as they have been throughout history. The day will come when everything will be relieved of the Jews – even the stones and trees which were harmed by them. Listen to the Prophet Muhammad, who tells you about the evil end that awaits the Jews. The stones and trees will want the Muslims to finish off every Jews.”<sup>3</sup>*

Parts of this sermon were derived from early Islamic Jew-hatred while other passages recall modern European antisemitism. One passage was very typical of Hamas’ argumentation: it depicts the persecution of the Jews and deduces the wickedness of the Jews from this very persecution. We heard a variant of Holocaust denial and saw, how the Islamist preacher lives out his fantasies of superiority. At the end, he returned to early Islam and quoted a story about the Prophet which is also quoted in the Charter of Hamas.

This preacher is very aggressive, but this is not an isolated case. MEMRI, the Middle East Media Research Institute, has documented hundreds of examples on the Internet.

The meaning of this hate propaganda is rarely grasped. While antisemitism from the far right occasions justified outrage, the very same antisemitism is downplayed and minimized when expressed by Muslims. Many either react as if hating Jews were a feature of the Oriental world, like hookahs or mosques. Or they justify antisemitism among Muslims as a side effect of the Middle East conflict which, they believe, would immediately disappear if the

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<sup>3</sup> Palestinian Authority TV, May 13, 2005. MEMRI’s documentation of this sermon, which I performed for my audiences it its entirety is available on <http://www.memritv.org/clip/en/0/0/0/239/0/669.htm>. The transcript is available on: <http://www.memri.org/bin/articles.cgi?Page=countries&Area=palestinian&ID=SP90805> .

conflict ended. Common to both approaches is the belief that Muslim antisemitism is something totally different to European and Nazi antisemitism.

This view won't stand up to scrutiny. My book examines the relationship between Islamism and antisemitism and the connection between early Islamism and late National Socialism during the 1930ies and 1940ies. Despite common misconceptions, the Islamist movement was born not during the 1960s but during the 1930s. So our first excursion takes us back to the 1930s.

### **The birth of Islamism (1928 – 1937)**

It was the Organization of the Muslim Brotherhood, founded in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna in Egypt, that established Islamism as a mass movement. The significance of the Brotherhood to Islamism is comparable to that of the Bolshevik Party to communism: It was and remains to this day the ideological reference point and organizational core for all later Islamist groups, including al-Qaeda and Hamas.

The Brotherhood advocated the replacement of Parliamentarianism by an “organic” state order based on the Caliphate. It demanded the abolition of interest and profit in favor of a forcibly imposed community of interests between capital and labor. And it set itself up as the rallying point for the restoration of patriarchal domination.

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At the forefront of the Brotherhood's efforts lay the struggle against all the sensual and "materialistic" temptations of the capitalist and communist world. At the tender age of 13, the pubescent al-Banna had founded a "Society for the Prevention of the Forbidden" and this is in essence what the Brothers were and are – a community of male zealots, whose primary concern is to prevent all the sensual and sexual sins forbidden according to their interpretation of the Koran. Their signature was most clearly apparent when they periodically reduced their local nightclubs, brothels and cinemas – constantly identified with Jewish influence – to ashes.

It was and is on the one hand a conservative religious movement: For Hassan al-Banna, only a return to the roots of early Islam could pave the way for an end to the intolerable conditions and humiliations of Muslims and newly establish the righteous Islamic order. It was and is at the same time a revolutionary political movement and the first Islamic organization to put down roots in the cities and to organize a mass movement able in 1948 to muster one million people in Egypt alone. It was a populist and activist, not an elitist movement and it was the first movement that systematically set about building a kind of "Islamist international."

The Islamists' answer to everything was the call for jihad to establish a new order based on sharia law. But the Brotherhood's jihad was not directed primarily against the British. Rather, it focused almost exclusively on Zionism and the Jews. Membership in the Brotherhood shot up from 800 to 200,000 between 1936 and 1938. In those two years the Brotherhood conducted only one major campaign in Egypt, a campaign directed against Zionism and the Jews.

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The starting shot for this campaign, which established the Brotherhood as a mass movement, was fired by a rebellion in Palestine directed against Jewish immigration and initiated by the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin al-Husseini. The Muslim Brotherhood organized their mass demonstrations in Egyptian cities under the slogans “Down With the Jews!” and “Jews Get Out of Egypt and Palestine!”

Their Jew-hatred drew on early Islamic sources: First, they found encouragement in the Koranic dictum that Jews are to be considered the worst enemy of the believers. Second, they justified their aspiration to eliminate the Jews of Palestine by invoking the example of Muhammad, who in the 7th century not only expelled two Jewish tribes from Medina, but also beheaded the entire male population of a third Jewish tribe. Third, Islamists considered, and still consider, Palestine an Islamic territory, Dar al-Islam, where Jews must not run a single village, let alone a state.

At the same time, their Jew-hatred was inspired by Nazi influences: Leaflets called for a boycott of Jewish goods and Jewish shops, and the Brotherhood’s newspaper, al-Nadhir, carried a regular column on “The Danger of the Jews of Egypt,” which published the names and addresses of Jewish businessmen and allegedly Jewish newspaper publishers all over the world. In fact, this column attributed every evil of modernity, from communism to brothels, to the “Jewish danger.”

But this is a decisive point: for the Mufti of Jerusalem and the Muslim Brotherhood, the struggle against the Jews was equivalent to struggling against the achievements of modernity. Let’s take a closer look at this.

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### **Jew-hatred ant the hatred of modernity**

It is a well-known fact that antisemitic ideologists from the very beginning have identified Jews with the threatening aspects of modernity. These ideologists did not hesitate to distort reality in order to justify their claims. In Palestine, however, the advent of modernity occurred in a different way. Here, the correlation between the arrival of Zionist immigrants and the arrival of rapid modernization was not imagined but real.

At that time large parts of the Arab community in Palestine were still leading mostly pre-modern lives dominated by patriarchy, the subordination of women, strict loyalty to one's clan, and the unquestioning adherence to one's religion. The new Zionist immigrants, however, were embarking on quite a different mode of life. To most of the rural population in Palestine, they personified the subversive and therefore threatening aspects of modern life such as secularization, the individual pursuit of happiness, freedom of opinion and the equality of women. There is hardly any other region in the world where such different life-styles and social ideals have clashed so sharply.

Still, during the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, not a few Arabs within and outside Palestine considered these achievements of modernity in a favorable light. In 1924, the modernizing model of Kemal Atatürk had replaced the caliphate in Turkey. In 1925, the Shah of Iran, Resa Khan, had embarked on the secularization of his country. Egypt too was caught up in this wave of modernization.

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But the Mufti was not only a radical Jew-hater. He was at the same time the most outspoken critic of any Islamic modernization. Speaking at a religious conference in 1935, the Mufti complained: "... We have begun to see some women in objectionable attire ... as well as some shameless magazines published in the name of Art and Culture, but open to all vices. These highly detrimental publications 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 Amin el-Husseini: "... They [i.e. 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 demoralize our youth by their mere presence."<sup>4</sup>

We heard previously what the Gaza preacher Ibrahim Mudeiris said: "Israel is a cancer spreading through the body of the Islamic nation". What he means is that Israel is a dangerous example, because it carries with it all the advantages of a modern, free life not dictated by Allah in "the body of the Islamic nation". Mudeiris' hatred of Jews is not caused by what Zionists do, it is caused by what Zionists are – freedom loving independent individuals.

This interrelationship between antisemitism and anti-modernism also accounts for the attraction of the antisemitic tract *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in the Arab world. The text is designed to discredit liberalism: in order to advance the combating of individual liberties, the latter are denounced as the essential tool of a global Jewish conspiracy. The

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<sup>4</sup> Uri M. Kupferschmidt, *The Supreme Muslim Council. Islam under the British Mandate for Palestine*, E. J. Brill, Leiden 1987, p. 250 and p. 252.

fabrications that were disseminated 100 years ago by the secret agents of the Tsar in order to rescue the Russian monarchy have been repeated for the last 50 years by the successors of Ibn Saud to save Arab feudalism or, in the case of Egypt, to preserve the existing power structure. This struggle of defense, however, started during the Twenties and Thirties. For el-Husseini, “Jerusalem” was the focal point of the “rebirth of Islam” in its pure version, and Palestine was the center from which the struggle against modernity and thereby against the Jews was to start. When the Muslim Brotherhood organized its mass demonstrations in Egypt it explicitly backed the Mufti’s antisemitic and antimodernist course. Hatred of modernity did not only unite the Muslim Brotherhood and the Mufti. In this decisive confrontation over the future of Islam – pro or contra modernism – Nazi Germany placed its weight on the side of the Arab anti-modernists, the Mufti and the Brotherhood. How did Nazi Germany support the budding Islamist movement?

### **Islamism and National Socialism (1937-1945)**

First, the Mufti’s so-called “Arab revolt” in Palestine which was in fact the first Islamist revolt against Jews *and* modern life, was supported with money and weapons. The Mufti himself admitted that it was only the money granted by the Germans that made it possible for him to carry out the uprising in Palestine. Second, the Muslim Brotherhood was supported with money as well. Documents seized in the flat of Wilhelm Stellbogen, the Director of the German News Agency affiliated to the German Legation in Cairo, show that

prior to October 1939 the Muslim Brothers received subsidies from this organization which were considerably larger than the subsidies offered to other anti-British activists.

The most effective vehicle of Nazi influence was, however, an extremely popular Arabic language radio station, which is now almost totally forgotten. Between April 1939 and April 1945, Radio Zeesen, located on the outskirts of Berlin, reached out to the illiterate Muslim masses through daily Arabic programs, which also went out in Persian and Turkish. At that time listening to the radio in the Arab world took place primarily in public squares or bazaars and coffee houses. In 1939, a British informant reported that he had passed a café in Jaffa. It was possible to listen to the German radio even outside he wrote. Moreover, in his words, “all around the café stood Arabs – even on the nearby balconies – listening to the broadcast”.<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, no other station was more popular than this Nazi Zeesen service. Firstly, it emphasized religion: Muslims were addressed as Muslims, not as Arabs. Secondly, it employed very popular broadcasters, such as Yunus al-Bahri or the Mufti of Jerusalem. Thirdly, the programs were professionally produced, with Arabic music and recitations from the Koran. Fourthly, the German transmitter was more powerful than those of its competitors, thus ensuring a better listening experience.

The bulk of the verbal material was devoted to whipping up antisemitic hatred. But there was something new about this antisemitism. Radio Zeesen built on the foundations of a centuries old Muslim anti-Judaism. This early

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<sup>5</sup> Rene Wildangel, *Zwischen Achse und Mandatsmacht. Palästina und der Nationalsozialismus*, Berlin (Klaus Schwarz Verlag) 2007, p. 359.

Islamic Jew-hatred was now fused with the fantasy of the Jewish world conspiracy and thus radicalized. While in early Islam, with some exceptions, everything Jewish was considered evil, now everything evil was deemed Jewish: capitalism, communism, the Allied powers and moral decline. While in early Islam Jews who converted or accepted dhimmi status had a chance of survival, people now began to kill Jews, in order to “liberate” the world from all evils.

Thus, the European anxiety that Jews are somehow "superhuman" was fused with the Islamic view that they are necessarily inferior. At one and the same time, we find Jews derided as "pigs" and "apes", while being demonized as the puppet masters of world politics. The Hamas Charter builds precisely on this mixture of old and new Jew-hatred. The outcome was (and is) a genocidal Islamist ideology which engenders genocidal programs and genocidal actions. Let me quote a short excerpt from the broadcast of 7 July 1942, when everybody thought that General Rommel appeared on the verge of capturing Cairo. This quote is part of a collection of Radio Zeesen transcripts which Prof. Herf from the University of Maryland discovered in the State Department's archives only in 2006.

“According to the Muslim religion the defense of life is a duty which can only be fulfilled by annihilating the Jews. ... Kill the Jews, burn their property, destroy their stores, annihilate these base supporters of British imperialism.

Your sole hope of salvation lies in annihilating the Jews before they annihilate you.”<sup>6</sup>

Radio Zeesen was a success not only in Cairo; it made an impact in Tehran as well. One of its regular listeners was a certain Ruhollah Khomeini. When in the winter of 1938 the 36-year-old Khomeini returned to the Iranian city of Qom from Iraq he “had brought with him a radio receiver set made by the British company Pye ... The radio proved a good buy... Many mullahs would gather at his home, often on the terrace, in the evenings to listen to Radio Berlin and the BBC”, writes his biographer Amir Taheri.<sup>7</sup> While Khomeini was not a follower of Hitler, those years may well have shaped his anti-Jewish attitudes.

Let me summarize our first trip into history: We saw that the rise of Nazism and Islamism took place in the same period. This was no accident, for both movements represented attempts to answer the world economic crisis of 1929 and the crisis of liberal capitalism. However different their answers may have been, they shared a crucial central feature: in both cases the sense of belonging to a homogeneous community was created through mobilizing against the Jews. The Nazis’ most important propaganda machine to foster this antisemitism was the short wave station at Zeesen which started broadcasting in April 1939. In April 1945, as the Nazi regime crumbled, Radio Zeesen ceased operation. But it was only after that date that its frequencies of hate really began to reverberate in the Arab world. The

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<sup>6</sup> National Archive, Washington D.C. Egypt: Cairo Embassy: General Records, 1936-1955: “Alexander Kirk, Axis Broadcasts in Arabic for the Period of July 3 to 9, 1942, Cairo, July 21, 1942 to the Secretary of State”

<sup>7</sup> Amir Taheri, *The Spirit of Allah*, Bethesda (Adler & Adler) 1986, pp. 99-100.

decisive watershed, whose consequences we are still feeling today, lay between 1945 and 1948.

### **The second division of the world (1945 –1989)**

After May 8, 1945, National Socialism was placed under the ban virtually everywhere – or almost everywhere. The exception was the Arab world, where Nazi ideology continued to reverberate. Here, former Nazis and their friends, including the Arab supporters of the Holocaust, could continue on as if nothing had changed. In her report on the 1961 trial of Adolf Eichmann, Hannah Arendt discussed the reactions to the trial in the Arab media:

“...newspapers in Damascus and Beirut, in Cairo and Jordan did not hide their sympathy for Eichmann or their regret that he ‘had not finished the job’; a broadcast from Cairo on the day the trial opened even injected a slightly anti-German note into its comments, complaining that there was not ‘a single incident in which one German plane flew over one Jewish settlement and dropped one bomb on it throughout the last war.’”<sup>8</sup>

Manifestly, following 8 May 1945, there occurred a twofold division of the world. The division in the political and economic system is well known as the Cold War. The second split – which was obscured by the Cold War – concerned the acceptance and continuing influence of National Socialist forms of thought. The fault line was already traced by 1946 and it had much to do with the period's most renowned Arab politician, the former Mufti of Jerusalem. In 1946, el-Husseini was sought by, among others, Britain and

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<sup>8</sup> Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1965), p. 13.

the USA on war crimes charges. Between 1941 and 1945, he lived in Berlin and was personally responsible for the fact that thousands of Jewish children, who might otherwise have been saved, died in the gas chambers. Nonetheless, Britain and the USA chose to forego criminal prosecution of Husseini in order to avoid spoiling their relations with the Arab world. France, in whose custody Husseini was being held, deliberately let him get away. The years of Nazi Arabic language propaganda had made the Mufti by far the best-known political figure in the Arab and Islamic world. But the 1946 de facto amnesty by the Western powers enhanced the Mufti's prestige even more. The Arabs saw in this impunity, wrote Simon Wiesenthal in 1946, "not only a weakness of the Europeans, but also absolution for past and future occurrences."<sup>9</sup> Now, the pro-Nazi past began to become a source of pride, not of shame. When on 10 June 1946 the headlines of the world press announced the Mufti's "escape" 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", reports a contemporary observer.<sup>10</sup> But the biggest cheerleaders for the Mufti were the Muslim Brothers, who at that time could mobilize a million people in Egypt alone.<sup>11</sup> It was they, indeed, who had organized the Mufti's return and from the start defended his involvement in the Holocaust from any criticism.

The two opposed views of the Holocaust collided in November 1947 in the General Assembly of the United Nations. On the one side were those nations who considered the Shoah a tragedy and therefore argued for a partition of

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<sup>9</sup> Simon Wiesenthal, *Großmufti – Großagent der Achse*, Salzburg: Ried-Verlag, 1947, p.2.

<sup>10</sup> Daphne Trevor, *Under the White Paper* (Jerusalem, 1948), pp. 206ff. See also Gensicke, op. cit., pp. 251ff and Küntzel, op. cit., pp. 48ff and 146ff.

<sup>11</sup> See: Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, London 1969, p. 328.

Palestine and the founding of two Palestinian states: an Arab Muslim state and a Jewish state. On the other, those who opposed a two-state solution in principle and whose most influential representative was none other than Amin el-Husseini, yet again playing the role of spokesman for the Palestinian Arabs. The Mufti's boundless antisemitism, which had cost thousands of Jews their lives in 1944, was directed four years later, when the gas chambers were no longer at work, at Israel. In el-Husseini's view, the Arabs "should jointly attack the Jews and destroy them as soon as the British forces have withdrawn [from the Palestinian Mandate territory]."<sup>12</sup> The Muslim Brotherhood likewise interpreted the UN Resolution from the standpoint of its anti-Semitic worldview: Hassan al-Banna "considered the whole United Nations intervention to be an international plot, carried out by the Americans, the British and the Russians under the influence of Zionism."<sup>13</sup>

The majority of Palestinian Arabs at that time was prepared to accept the partition plan for pragmatic reasons. Some because they knew that the fight against it was futile, some because they wanted to keep their job in the Jewish led citrus groves while a third group thought that agreement with the Jews was in the best interests of the Palestinian Arab nation.<sup>14</sup> Some Arab leaders also sympathized with the partition plan - albeit only in private, since they were afraid to openly contradict the Mufti and Muslim Brotherhood. Among them was Abdullah, Emir of Transjordan, Sidqi Pasha,

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<sup>12</sup> Nicholas Bethell, *Das Palästina-Dreieck* (Frankfurt/Main, 1979) , p. 381.

<sup>13</sup> See Abd Al-Fattah Muhammad El-Awaisi, *The Muslim Brothers and the Palestine Question 1928-1947* (London and New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 1998), p. 195.

<sup>14</sup> Hillel Cohen, *Army of Shadows. Palestinian Collaboration with Zionism, 1917-1948*, Berkely et. al. (University of California Press) 2008, pp. 233-6.

Prime Minister of Egypt, Abd al-Rahman Azzam, head of the Arab League and Muzahim al-Pashashi, former Prime Minister of Iraq who argued that, “Eventually there would have to be an acceptance of the Jewish state’s existence, but for now it was politically impossible to acknowledge this publicly. To do so, he said, would cause a revolt in Iraq.”<sup>15</sup> It was thus the cowardice of the Arab leaders and the cynicism of the West, who let the Mufti escape, that paved the way for one of the most fateful watersheds of the twentieth century: the Arab military assault on Israel in 1948. Since then antisemitism in the Arab world has continued to radicalize.

In 1952 the defeat of the Arab armies brought to power yet another former fellow traveller of the Nazis: Gamal Abdel Nasser. Nasser had the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* disseminated throughout the Arab world. After Nasser's military campaign against Israel also failed miserably in the Six-Day War of 1967, the previously incited hate against Jews was once again radicalized in an Islamist direction. Now antisemitism was mixed again with the Islamists' hatred for sensuality and joy in life and popularized as religious resistance against all "corrupters of the world".

Now, the most important manifesto of Islamist antisemitism - the essay "Our Struggle with the Jews" by the Muslim Brother Sayyid Qutb which was 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;

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<sup>15</sup> Cited in: Bruse Maddy-Weitzman, *The Crystallization of the Arab State System 1945-1954*, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1993, p. 80.

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."<sup>16</sup> 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. The first 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" means the archaic subjugation of women.

With the Iranian Revolution of 1979 Islamism gained its first great victory. Three years later Hizbollah, under the influence of Khomeini, began systematically using human beings as bombs. The hatred of Jews was now greater than the fear of death. Whenever the possibility of a peaceful solution of the Middle East conflict appeared on the horizon, it would be drowned in the blood of suicidal mass murders as we have seen just a few days ago with respect to the Annapolis endeavor.

Let me summarize my second trip into history: The historical record disapproves the assumption that Islamic antisemitism is *caused* by Israeli policy. The seeds of the harvest that is now being reaped by Hizbollah and Hamas were sown 1,400 years ago by Mohammad and seventy years ago through the mesmerizing and entertaining programs of a Nazi radio station. Thus, it is not the escalation of the Middle East conflict that has caused antisemitism; it is rather antisemitism in the Arab and Islamic world that

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<sup>16</sup> 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, 1986), pp. 99ff.

has caused the escalation in the Middle East – again and again and today more than ever.

History also teaches us that only a particular faction among the Muslims made common cause with the Nazis. It shows that, in the thirties and forties, this pro-Nazi wing only gained the upper hand over those Muslims who disagreed through naked violence. Long before Israel was founded, this wing had already fallen prey to the demonizing delusions of the Nazis. Since then this wing, regardless of what Zionism has or has not done, has viewed the world through a lens with two superimposed distorting filters: that of early Islamic Jew-hatred and that of modern antisemitism.

Today, they use terror again to suppress every voice in the Gaza strip which is supportive of the two-state-solution. Today, they increase their antisemitic propaganda and constantly infuse Jew-hatred even to the kids. There is no spiral of violence. Israel wants the violence to end, but Islamic antisemitism – not Israeli policies – is the reason why Hamas – like Nazi Germany – wants to kill Jews indiscriminately: be it in the form of suicide bombings, be it with rockets, which randomly kill Jews, be it through the murder of students who happen to be in a library. This hatred of Jews – combined with the cult of sacrifice – has extinguished some basic human instincts; hence the laughter and the celebrations at the murder of Jewish children.

Islamic antisemitism is the reason why Hamas prioritises terror and war rather than peace and welfare in the Middle East. This Weltanschauung is the reason why Hizbollah's leader Hassan Nasrallah warned Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries "not to normalize relations with Israel".

Antisemitism is the only reason why Iran – a country that has neither a territorial dispute with Israel nor a Palestinian refugee problem – calls for the destruction of Israel again and again. This antisemitism has nothing to do with ethnic characteristics or cultural peculiarities. In fact, what we are seeing is the revival of Nazi ideology in a new garb. It is of the utmost importance to give support to all those Muslims who oppose this development. Let me therefore end with the appeal by a Muslim, the scholar of Islam, Bassam Tibi: “Only when the public take the appropriate stand against the antisemitic dimension of Islamism will it be possible to say that they have truly understood the lessons of the Holocaust.”

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