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'WIPE OUT THE JEWS'

Anti-Semitic Hate Speech in the Name of Islam

By *Matthias Küntzel*

Though most Muslims reject Islamism and its propaganda, anti-Semitic messages from satellite channels like the Hamas-run Al-Aqsa are helping to bring a message of hate and intolerance to Europe. The effects of such hate preaching can already be felt in Germany.



REUTERS

Sowing the seeds of hate: The Hamas satellite station Al-Aqsa recently used a Mickey Mouse clone to teach Muslim children -- in Gaza and Europe -- to hate Jews.

"Sanabel, what do you want to do to help the Al-Aqsa Mosque?" Farfur asks on the children's program of Hamas's Al-Aqsa television station. "We want to fight." "And what else?" "Wipe out the Jews." Now Farfur, the cartoon character on Hamas's children's television program, is satisfied. Farfur is a carbon copy of Walt Disney's Mickey Mouse, but the Hamas version does something that Mickey would never do: He entertains children while propagating the murder of Jews.

International protests forced Hamas to take its Disney clone out of circulation. Al-Aqsa complied, but promptly turned Farfur's departure into an anti-Semitic statement: Farfur was clubbed to death by an Israeli official. Then the girl hosting the program turned to the camera and said: "You've seen how the Jews killed Farfur as a martyr. What do you want to say to the Jews?" A three-year-old girl named Shaima called into the show to say: "We don't like Jews, because they are dogs! We will fight them!" "Oh, Shaima, you're right," the girl in the studio replied, "the Jews are criminals and our enemies."

Farfur's appearances are typical of Hamas's anti-Semitic propaganda, which the organization also exports to Germany via satellite, hoping to breed new generations of fanatical anti-Semites and suicide bombers.

The Hamas station, founded in 2006, is modeled on the Hezbollah station in neighboring Lebanon, al-Manar. Al-Manar's children's program shows children wearing explosive belts and images of dying Israeli soldiers, with triumphant chants as background music. Cartoons depict scenes like that of a child blowing himself up near Israeli soldiers, or of a smiling boy flying toward Israel on a missile. Adult viewers can enjoy video clips that use inspirational graphics and rousing music to glorify the act of committing a suicide bombing, while the evening lineup offers family entertainment with a series of films based on the classic anti-Semitic forgery "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion."

In late 2004, France banned the broadcasting of al-Manar through the European Eutelsat satellite system,

citing the station's anti-Semitic content. Nevertheless, messages of hate were still being broadcast into the living rooms of Muslims in Germany via satellites controlled by Saudi Arabia and Egypt, ArabSat and NileSat. Exposure to this programming was apparently not without consequences.

Rabbi Zalman Gurevitch was wearing a traditional black robe when he left his synagogue in Frankfurt's Westend neighborhood on Sept. 7, 2007. It was the Sabbath. According to the police report, he encountered a 22-year-old German of Afghan descent "spontaneously and coincidentally" a short time later. It was early evening and the man, shouting "You shit Jew, I'm going to kill you," plunged a knife into the rabbi's abdomen. Gurevitch was recognizable as a Jew. He survived, thanks to luck and emergency surgery.

Although this attack was an isolated incident, it is hard to overlook how hatred imported from Beirut and Gaza resurfaces in the form of daily acts of anti-Semitism in schools and athletic clubs, on streets and in the subway. Young children raised to be anti-Semitic are already using the phrase "You Jew!" as a derogatory expression in kindergartens and on playgrounds. Schoolchildren berate their teachers, calling them Jew dogs, for not offering Sharia-compatible instruction, and Jewish schoolchildren are attacked and feel compelled to switch to Berlin's Jewish high school and to hide the insignia of their Jewish faith -- the yarmulke and the Star of David -- when in public.

Neo-Nazi sentiments were behind the majority of anti-Semitic incidents reported in 2006. At the same time, however, the number of anti-Semitic criminal offences committed by Muslims jumped from 33 to 88.

In 2007 the German Interior Ministry published a study on the worldviews of "Muslims in Germany," the most comprehensive of its kind to date, which confirmed this trend. According to the study, "anti-Semitic attitudes were found among young Muslims far more often than among non-Muslim immigrants or domestic non-Muslims." The study cited examples of Muslim students to illustrate that this anti-Semitism cannot be dismissed as the product of an underdog attitude within marginalized social groups, but instead represents an ideological way of thinking. "The pervasiveness of sweeping anti-Semitic prejudices among Muslim students was also noticeable," the study pointed out. "Such prejudices, expressed indirectly by slightly more than one-third and in extreme form by about 10 percent of students, are significantly more common than anti-Christian sentiments."

What is the source of this profound hatred, which stations like al-Aqsa and al-Manar are spreading and one in 10 of the Muslim students surveyed embraces? The Middle East conflict is often cited as a reason, but this is too simplistic. Hostility toward Jews has existed since Islam came into being. In its charter, Hamas quotes the Prophet Muhammad as saying: "The Day of Judgment will not come about until Muslims fight Jews and kill them. Then, the Jews will hide behind rocks and trees, and the rocks and trees will cry out: 'O Muslim, there is a Jew hiding behind me, come and kill him.'" Through the use of such language, the hatred of Jews is given a religious justification.

Nazi Germany entered the picture in the 20th century. The Nazis, hoping to use early Islamic hostility toward Jews for their own ends, paid substantial sums of money to support the Muslim Brotherhood's anti-Jewish campaigns in Egypt. And just as they had radicalized widespread Christian anti-Semitism in Europe, the Nazis did their utmost to radicalize the latent anti-Judaism that had originated in early Islam.

While everything Jewish was considered evil in early Islam, everything evil was now being labeled as Jewish, from wars and revolutions to the drug trade and the decline of moral values. Between 1938 and 1945, the Nazis' radio station broadcast its lies about a supposed Jewish world conspiracy into the Islamic world every evening. The professionally produced programs were broadcast in Arabic, Persian and Turkish, and were very popular. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the Hamas charter has also adopted this legacy.

The Jews, we read in Article 22, "stood behind the French Revolution, the Communist Revolution and most of the revolutions we hear about... They stood behind World War I ... There is no war going on anywhere without them having their finger in it."

Whether in the case of Muhammad or here, in both cases Hamas used sources to justify its hatred of the Jews that are older than Israel. But once someone has fallen for this demonizing delusion, he will find his anti-Jewish

concept of the enemy confirmed in everything that an Israeli government does or fails to do. What is more, those who hold Jews responsible for all the world's ills will paint the Jewish state as the root of all evil. Following Hamas's example, they will celebrate or deny the Holocaust, even in Berlin.

Teachers in the German capital are sometimes confronted with Muslim students who expressly use the Holocaust to justify their sympathies for the Nazis ("I like Hitler; he did the right thing with the Jews"), refusing to take part in school trips to concentration camp memorials. During one excursion to the German Historical Museum, a group of Muslim youth gathered in front of a replica of a gas chamber in Auschwitz and applauded.

Can we blame Israel for the mindset that leads to such activities? Perhaps it would be more apt to conclude that the waves of hatred that the Nazis' shortwave radio transmitter once broadcast into the Arab world are now returning in the form of a delayed echo.

Building Street Cred for the Islamist Movement

Most Muslims reject Islamism and its propaganda. According to the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, Germany's domestic intelligence agency, only about one percent of Muslims living in Germany are members of Islamist organizations whose political objectives include anti-Semitism. But the non-organized potential for radicalization is significantly greater. According to the "Muslims in Germany" study, between eight and 12 percent of Muslims hold anti-Western and anti-democratic views. "Attitudes ranging from strongly fundamentalist to openness to Islamism" are found among younger Muslims, according to the study. One of the respondents, the authors write, articulated a "desire for a young political avant-garde," which, the respondent said, must "take matters into its own hands."

Following the demise of the socialist bloc and the decimation of protest movements with a secular orientation, such a rebellious impulse does in fact shape the Islamist movement into an anti-Western avant-garde of sorts. As the only adversary of the global world order, it possesses an ideology, a lot of money and supporters worldwide. Advertising for the Islamist cause has used pop culture with as little inhibition as Hamas has unscrupulously resorted to a Hollywood cartoon character to recruit children. Trend-conscious clothing, music and lifestyle advertising bring "street credibility" to the Islamist mission. Online shops, like the Hamas-affiliated portal Islamicstatewear.com, sell T-shirts with expressly religious messages, like "Islam! Submit!," "I love my Prophet" and "State University of Mecca," while musicians like the rapper "Ammar114" (his name is based on the 114 suras of the Koran) use their raps to promote their version of Islam.

Other Muslim rappers portray themselves as representatives of a "Jihad Generation" and pepper their "intifada rap" with anti-Semitism of the worst kind. "Zyklon Beatz," a Berlin rap group, released a CD in 2006 with lyrics describing Jews as animals and demonizing them as devils in human form. Rapper Bushido, who won the prestigious ECHO Music Award in February 2008 and was broadcast live on RTL as Germany's best hip hop artist, stylizes himself as a Muslim assassin: "I am a Taliban ... I am this terrorist young people believe in ... I am King Bushido, and my second name is Mohammed. And I have set your city on fire."

In a rap video placed on the Internet, a Lebanese man living in Berlin chants: "Kill every Jewish pig, the Jahudis are unclean. They should all die and they aren't worth our tears. Arabs like us rule." Within a few weeks, his video, which translates Hezbollah's and Hamas's universes of hatred into a form more accessible to youth, had provoked hundreds of comments, most of them enthusiastic.

But one criticism of the German-language hip hop scene -- that such statements no longer provoke a scandal -- also applies to the German public at large. While the anti-Semitism coming from the extremist right wing attracts attention, and for good reason, there is too little awareness of anti-Semitism articulated by Muslims. For some, hatred of Jews is as much a part of the Middle Eastern world as water pipes and mosques. Others say nothing because they see Muslims mainly as victims. Still others gloss over Islamic anti-Semitism as an understandable reaction to the Middle East conflict, while organizations like the Left Party even see potential common ground with the Islamist movement.

In 2003, the German Interior Ministry banned Hizb ut-Tahrir, an Arab anti-Semitic organization, and in 2005 it ordered Yeni Akit, a Turkish anti-Semitic publishing house, to shut down. And in 2007, the Interior Ministry

supported projects to combat anti-Semitism among Muslim youth. But the Foreign Ministry has consistently undermined all of these efforts by accepting the importation of anti-Semitic propaganda through Saudi Arabian and Egyptian satellite broadcasters.

Meanwhile, a rabbit named Assud has replaced Mickey Mouse on Hamas's children's program. "Why is your name Assud (lion) if you are a rabbit?" a girl asked in the broadcast on Feb. 8, 2008. "Because I, Assud, will clean up the Jews and devour them." The girl nodded in agreement, and said: "May Allah's will be done."

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