



PERSPECTIVES

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German Intelligence Issues Taboo-Breaking Report on Muslim Antisemitism

by Dr. Manfred Gerstenfeld

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: The German Agency for Domestic Security recently published a report on Muslim antisemitism in the country – a development that is unprecedented not only for Germany but for all of Europe. The report makes clear that Muslim antisemitism is a major problem in Germany. At long last, Muslim antisemitism in Germany has been officially detailed for the public.

The German Agency for Domestic Security (*Bundesamt fuer Verfassungsschutz*) recently published a 40-page report entitled “Antisemitism in Islamism.” Never before has any European intelligence agency published a report on Muslim antisemitism. This report is a major break with the German past. It is the first official publication by a national body that exposes in reasonable detail the antisemitism originating in parts of the country’s Muslim community.

The report’s title doesn’t quite reflect its content. It was likely considered unacceptable – from a political correctness point of view – to give the report the more accurate title “Antisemitism and Islam.” In many (not all) of the quotes below, the word “Islamist” should be replaced by the word “Muslim.”

The report defines Islamism as a form of political extremism among Muslims that aims to eliminate democracy. Antisemitism is one of its essential ideological elements.

Many Muslims are not antisemitic, but the antisemitism problem in Islam is far from limited to people with extreme political views or even to religious Muslims. The report notes that many incidents have been caused by individuals “about whom until then no [connections] were [indicated] to organized Islamism.” Islamism was probably not the direct cause behind a substantial number of incidents.

Just a year and a half ago, speaking of Muslim antisemitism was taboo in Germany and was certainly never to be mentioned by politicians. This was despite the fact that it was generally known that major antisemitic incidents had been perpetrated by Muslims in the country.

The document starts by stating that for historical reasons, and in view of the country's experience with National Socialism, antisemitic positions were viewed for a long time as being inevitably related to right-wing antisemitism. Only gradually in the current century has it become clear that right-wing extremists do not hold a monopoly on antisemitism in Germany. The report states that a pattern of common, "daily" antisemitism is widespread in the social and political center of German society. In addition, anti-Zionism and antisemitism exist among leftist extremists.

The authors state that antisemitic opinions in Islamism are even more far-reaching. Religious, territorial, and political motives combine into an antisemitic worldview. All Islamist groups have as a central pillar a picture of Judaism as the enemy.

The report states that the arrival of more than a million Muslims in Germany between 2014 and 2017 increased the influence of Islamist antisemitism inside the country. It cites Anti-Defamation League statistics of antisemitism among the populations of states in the Middle East and North Africa. In that region, Turkey – a country from which many Muslims now living in Germany originated – is one of the least antisemitic countries, yet even it is "nearly 70%" antisemitic. The study mentions that many children in these countries are raised with a steady diet of antisemitic indoctrination.

Like other studies, the report sees a turning point in German awareness of Islamist antisemitism in a demonstration that took place in Berlin in 2017. At that demonstration, placards were carried demanding the destruction of Israel. An Israeli flag was set on fire. The report notes that extremist acts were initiated by people who were unknown to have had any prior relationship with Islamist organizations – a fact that has probably never before been published.

The burning of the Israeli flag shocked Germans because of the association with the far more severe book burnings of 1933, which were encouraged by the German National Socialist government at the time. The video of the flag-burning went viral, prompting a number of brief comments by leading politicians. German president and Social Democrat Frank-Walter Steinmeier said the responsibility of Germany for its history knows "no limits for those who were born later, and no exceptions for immigrants." He added, "This is not negotiable for all those who live in Germany and want to live here." Jens Spahn, a board member of Chancellor Merkel's Christian Democrat Union (CDU), who has since become Germany's Minister of Health, remarked that the mass immigration from Muslim countries was the reason for the demonstrations in Germany. Stephan Harbarth, Deputy Chairman of the CDU/CSU faction in the Bundestag (the German parliament), said, "We have to strongly confront

the antisemitism of migrants with an Arab background and those from African countries.”

The study states that it is crucial to counteract the spread of extreme antisemitism among Muslims in Germany. This will require a greater awareness of the problem in the public domain. That should include teachers, social workers, the police, and employees of the government office for migration and refugees, as well as relevant officials in Germany’s federal states.

The authors also note that the way Islamists interpret Islam is contrary to the basic elements of the German constitution concerning the sovereignty of citizens, the separation of state and religion, freedom of expression, and the general equality of all citizens. This is why German intelligence services monitor the activities of Islamist organizations.

The report lists major antisemitic expressions of Islamist antisemitism, such as: “Jews control finance and the economy,” “Jews operate with the help of secret agents and organizations,” and “there is an eternal battle between Muslims and Jews.” The report also names various extremist Muslim organizations that are active in Germany. They include the local Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas, Hezbollah, Hizb Ut-Tahrir, ISIS, the Turkish Milli Görüs, and Salafists.

The long-overdue study concludes that the more than 100 antisemitic incidents officially caused by Muslims in 2017 are most likely only the tip of the iceberg.

Shortly after the above document was released, a 178-page report was published by the Liberal *Islamischer Bund* (Liberal Islamic Association) entitled “Empowerment Instead of Antisemitism.” It was financed, *inter alia*, by the German government office for migration and refugees. The report shows that many Muslim teens justify their antisemitism with the argument that they themselves have experienced degradation and intolerance due to increasing Islamophobia. It concludes that members of the Muslim minority seek a scapegoat in an even smaller minority, the Jews.

This second report came under heavy criticism. Alan Posener, political correspondent at *Die Welt*, wrote that antisemitism among Muslim youth is the expression of preexisting antisemitic prejudice, not a response to Islamophobia. Political scientist Hamed Abdel-Samad also denied that Muslim antisemitism is the result of Islamophobia. If this were the case, he wrote, the Muslim world would be free of Islamism and antisemitism, since Islamophobia is nonexistent in those countries.

Dr. Manfred Gerstenfeld is a Senior Research Associate at the BESA Center and a former chairman of the Steering Committee of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs. He specializes in Israeli–Western European relations, antisemitism, and anti-Zionism, and is the author of The War of a Million Cuts.