
OPINION: EUROPEAN ANTI-SEMITISM IS NOT IMPORTED

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In Europe and in Germany there is currently a lot of talk about imported anti-Semitism, supposedly brought here by Muslims. Yet hatred of Jews is part of Christianity's DNA, says Krsto Lazarevic.

There's a causality in Germany's Islam debate that merits a closer look. Whenever provincial Bavarian politicians proclaim that Islam does not belong to Germany, their speeches contain repeated references to the country's "Judeo-Christian" character or tradition. There is, however, no mention of the fact that a substantial part of this Christian-Jewish tradition was Christians persecuting, expelling and murdering Jews. And when European households paint eggs for Easter, it should be pointed out that Christian anti-Judaism is based on the age-old accusation that the Jews were the ones who murdered Jesus.

Jews were driven from their homes by Christians for almost two thousand years. In 1492 the Alhambra Edict decreed that they should be expelled from what is now Spain, after living there under Muslim rule for centuries. Many of these Jews found refuge in the Ottoman Empire, at the invitation of Sultan Bayezid II. The Sultan is quoted as saying: How foolish of the Spanish kings to expel their best citizens and leave them to their bitterest enemies."

Jewish life blossomed in Ottoman cities like Thessaloniki and Sarajevo for centuries, and lasted until the Nazis arrived. Those are historical facts one should perhaps be conscious of when speaking, on the one hand, of a Judeo-Christian tradition, and at the same time of Muslims who "import" anti-Semitism.

But you don't need to know anything of this historical background to know, as a German, how absurd this nonsense about "imported anti-Semitism" is. You only need to know that Germans committed the biggest crime in the history of mankind: the Holocaust.

Germany's most successful export

'Germany,' 'anti-Semitism,' 'imported' – it's impossible to come up with an intelligent sentence in which these three words appear. Apart from one: Anti-Semitism in Germany is not imported. Anti-Semitism is Germany's most successful export, ahead of cars, beer and Birkenstock sandals.

The Germans are a people who manage to make the security of Israel and the fight against anti-Semitism a reason of state, while at the same time devoting an entire year to celebrating the reformer Martin Luther, who called for synagogues to be burned down and rabbis banned from

their work, on pain of death. The German language has a special word for criticism of Israel: Israelkritik. There are no special words for criticism of Spain, or criticism of Brazil, or "criticism of Uganda."

A European tradition

Anti-Semitism belongs to Germany, and to Europe. It is found on the political right, the political left, and in the so-called center of society. Among professors and construction workers; its expressed by Hans and by Ahmed.

Yes, we must talk about anti-Semitic attitudes among Muslims in Europe and Germany. We must, because the 85-year-old Holocaust survivor Mireille Knoll was stabbed to death in her Paris apartment, and her killers were likely motivated by anti-Semitism. And because one year ago, in the same area, a Jewish woman, Sarah Halimi, was pushed off her balcony by a neighbor shouting "Allahu Akbar." And because anti-Semitic demonstrators near the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin feel emboldened to torch a Star of David.

But no, Islam is not the problem □ because there is no "one Islam." But there are majority Muslim countries where anti-Semitism forms part of the reason of state. There is Saudi Arabia, which boasts Salafism as one of its most successful exports; and there is the Islamic Republic of Iran, which repeatedly threatens to annihilate Israel. And there is a minority of Muslims in Europe and in Germany who approve of this.

There is a problem

There are Islamic associations that tolerate hate preachers speaking at their mosques. There is a "political Islam" which some of these associations represent. And there are prominent German politicians who make treaties with these associations and share a podium with those who seek to justify attacks on Jews.

We must talk about how we are going to deal with this in future □□□□□ if there are voices on the left and among liberals that refuse to tolerate such debate. Because they suspect it is motivated by "Islamophobia," and fail to see that they are leaving an important topic for the right to address. The Middle East conflict is going on not only in Israel, Gaza and the autonomous Palestinian territories, but also in my neighborhood, in Berlin-Neukölln.

What happens in Berlin-Neukölln?

When Donald Trump recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel in December, and Fatah, the supposedly moderate Palestinian party, called for "three days of rage," I didnt need to read about it in the paper. I could see it in my neighborhood. On Sonnenallee, probably the most Arab street in Germany. Whenever theres trouble in the Middle East, the proprietors of the little shops put more items in the windows with the flag of Palestine overlaying the territory of Israel. Israel does not exist on these maps.

At such times, the keffiyeh density also increases. We must assume that many of the █ mostly young █ people wearing them are not aware that this item of clothing was established by a Grand Mufti who was an admirer of Hitler's extermination policy. After all, the Palestinian scarf was also part of the left-wing subculture in Germany for many years. Nonetheless, it has unpleasant overtones. Especially when, after pro-Palestinian demonstrations, large groups of men band together in Neukölln bellowing anti-Semitic slogans.

However, most anti-Semitic crimes in Germany are committed by right-wing extremists. And when right-wingers blather on about "imported anti-Semitism" and put Muslims under general suspicion, the best option is still to show them the raised middle finger. But it's also true that you can't venture down Sonnenallee at night in a kippah. In Germany, 2018. We must finally do something about this.

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