Muslims in Global Societies Series

Günther Jikeli
Joëlle Allouche-Benayoun *Editors*

Perceptions of the Holocaust in Europe and Muslim Communities

Sources, Comparisons and Educational Challenges

Springer

Muslims in Global Societies Series

Volume 5

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ISBN 978-94-007-5306-8 ISBN 978-94-007-5307-5 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-5307-5
Springer Dordrecht Heidelberg New York London

Library of Congress Control Number: 2012952933

Printed on acid-free paper

Springer is part of Springer Science+Business Media (www.springer.com)

Acknowledgements

The cooperation with the authors included in this book has been exceptional. We are grateful for their distinguished papers and for their patience during the review process. We would like to thank our friends and colleagues who have read portions of this manuscript and provided us with the benefit of their insights. Most of the papers were presented and discussed at a conference on "European Muslims' Perceptions of the Holocaust", in Paris in 2010, which was organised by the Groupe Sociétés, Religions, Laïcités – CNRS, Paris, the International Institute for Education and Research on Antisemitism and the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation, supported by the Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah, the Mémorial de la Shoah, the Foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future" and L'Ecole pratique des hautes études (EPHE, Paris-Sorbonne). We are especially grateful to Philippe Portier, Kim Robin Stoller, Rita-Danielle Breseghello and Bérénice Benayoun.

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Introduction

Joëlle Allouche-Benayoun and Günther Jikeli

The way people think and feel about the systematic murder of European Jewry – today commonly termed as the Holocaust or the Shoah – is changing over time.[1] The erosive effect of time seems unavoidable, but, as Alvin Rosenfeld has accurately demonstrated in his recent book "The End of the Holocaust", perceptions of the Holocaust are often distorted by certain cultural pressures and values (Rosenfeld 2011). They are also influenced by the collective identity and, particularly in Europe, by the role the respective country played during the Holocaust. Among other factors, the forms of commemoration of the Holocaust differ depending upon whether major segments of the society were perpetrators, bystanders or victims; whether the country collaborated with National Socialism in the murdering of Jews or not; or if the country fought against Germany. The same is true on an individual level: even distant family members who had a role in the Holocaust can have a significant impact on how their children and grandchildren think and talk about the Holocaust. However, there is a particular culture of remembrance and even to some degree "Europeanisation" concerning the commemoration of the Holocaust (Leggewie 2009).

[1] In the French-speaking sphere, the term Shoah is usually used to designate the Jewish genocide perpetrated by the Nazis. The term Holocaust is preferred by most scholars in the English-speaking sphere with all of its implicit religious meanings regarding sacrifice for and to God. Both terms are alternately used throughout this collection, depending upon the respective origin of the author of each article. In September 2011, the term Shoah was the focus of an intense polemic in the French media: is it or is it not the right word?

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G. Jikeli and J. Allouche-Benayoun (eds.), *Perceptions of the Holocaust in Europe and Muslim Communities*, Muslims in Global Societies Series 5,
DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-5307-5_1, © Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht 2013

Today, the Holocaust is condemned in the public discourses in European countries and blatant Holocaust denial is generally discredited and even illegal in some European countries (Bazyler 2006). Holocaust education is part of the curriculum in many countries, and Holocaust memorials and commemorations are given importance by the political and intellectual elite (OSCE/ODIHR 2010, 2006). However, some developments concerning the remembrance of the Holocaust give cause for concern. For example, Yehuda Bauer expressed his "deep concern about repeated attempts to equate the Nazi regime's genocidal policies, with the Holocaust at their centre, with other murderous or oppressive actions; an equation that not only trivialises and relativises the genocide of the Jews perpetrated by the Nazi regime, but is also a mendacious revision of recent world history." (Bauer 2009). He did so on the occasion of a resolution passed on 2 April 2009 by the European parliament recognising a day of remembrance for victims of both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union on the anniversary of the infamous Ribbentrop-Molotov agreement. In private discourses, the trivialisation of the Holocaust is often more bluntly expressed, partly motivated by the wish for "normalisation" and by secondary antisemitism.[2] However, the comparison of the Holocaust to other genocides is legitimate and even deepens our understanding of the Holocaust. As a matter of fact, biased views begin with equating rather than comparing. Or when "the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people" are denied, as noted in the 'Working Definition of Antisemitism' EUMC/FRA 2005). Surveys indicate both a lack of knowledge about the Holocaust[3] as well as widespread biased views of the Holocaust and Holocaust remembrance. According to a 2009 European survey, in Germany, 48.9% believed that Jews try to take advantage of their having been victims during the Nazi era, 32.4% in France and 21.8% in Britain. And 45.7% of Europeans in 7 countries agreed with the biased analogy between the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Holocaust, namely that "Israel is conducting a war of extermination against the Palestinians." (Zick et al. 2009, 2011).

Over the course of time, the Holocaust has become a symbol of absolute evil, of barbarity, and at the same time Jews have become the symbol of the absolute victims. But in anti-Zionist discourse, Zionists and Zionism (and sometimes "the Jews" by proxy) are portrayed as the absolute evil, which explains such widespread equations between the Holocaust and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, the conception of the Shoah as both the absolute evil and the European evil explains the pedagogical will across all of Europe to provide a translation for "never again".

[2] Secondary antisemitism is a term coined by Peter Schönbach (1961) which is understood as the psychological phenomenon that the mere presence of Jews can remind non-Jews of the Holocaust and their feelings of guilt which then in turn produces negative sentiments against Jews. The Israeli psychiatrist Zvi Rex is often quoted with the phrase, "The Germans will never forgive the Jews for Auschwitz" (Broder 1986).

[3] In Germany, 39% of the general population said in 2005 that they are not well informed about "the time before 1945", 40% said so in the UK and 24 % in France (IMAS International 2005). A poll commissioned in 2009 by Miramax and the London Jewish Cultural Centre showed that only 37% of 11–16year olds in Britain knew that the Holocaust claimed the lives of six million Jews, with many drastically underestimating the death toll. Some of the results were published by *The Telegraph* on March 9, 2009.

School trips and other pilgrimages to Auschwitz are the most concrete illustration of this; and yet, aren't these journeys just fulfilling a self-satisfying compassionate impulse instead of engaging in a real social, historical and contextualised analysis?

The history of the Shoah remains challenging for humanity and for European societies in particular. However, a new challenge has been discussed in recent years. Some migrant communities which are now part of European societies although they do not share the European history of the Shoah, seem to be reluctant to remember the murder of European Jewry as one of the greatest crimes of humanity. Teachers have reported difficulties teaching about the Holocaust, particularly with some Muslim students (Brenner 2004).[4] The reluctance of European Muslim organisations to participate in Holocaust commemorations, or their boycotting of such events, is another indication of the problematic views of the Holocaust held by some European Muslims.[5]

Some surveys point in the same direction. In Germany in January 2010, *Die Zeit* published a survey of 400 people of Turkish origin concerning their views of the Holocaust. Sixty-eight percent admitted that they know little about the Holocaust and 40% said that people of Turkish background living in Germany should not be concerned with studying the Holocaust (*Die Zeit* 2010). While this hints at an identitarian approach to remembrance (possibly adopted from the identitarian approach observed in many people within German mainstream society[6]) and a denial of its significance for all members of humanity, other polls reveal attitudes of "soft-core" Holocaust denial, to use a term coined by Deborah Lipstadt. A poll of Muslims in the UK from 2006 showed that only a third believed that the Holocaust happened as it is taught and 17% said that it has been exaggerated (GfK NOP 2006).

However, one should be careful not to essentialise such views; being Muslim does not lead to biased views of the Holocaust or of Jews.[7] But then, what does influence Muslims' views of the Holocaust? European Muslims are largely migrants or their descendants who arrived in Europe after the Second World War. Are they also influenced by the collective identity of their country of residence? How strong is the influence of their ethnic and religious identities? What is the role of private and public discourses about the Holocaust in the countries of origin? Muslims are the largest religious minority in Europe today. European societies such as Germany, France and Britain include increasing numbers of immigrants, many of them with Muslim background. Estimations fall between 13 and 20 million Muslims in the European Union (European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia

[4] A report for the French government for 2010 confirmed that antisemitic attitudes are often voiced by Muslim students and "can be manifested during lessons about the genocide of Jews" and are often related to anti-American attitudes (Haut Conseil à l'intégration 2011, 94). Difficulties of Holocaust Education due to antisemitic attitudes among Muslim students were also mentioned in a study in Britain (The Historical Association 2007, 15).

[5] The Muslim Council of Britain has repeatedly and explicitly boycotted the national Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration in the UK. See Michael Whine's chapter in this volume (Chap. 4).

[6] See Mehmet Can's, Karoline Georg's and Ruth Hatlapa's chapter in this volume (Chap. 12).

[7] Such an essentializing and effectively racist view is conveyed by a few authors such as Hans-Peter Raddatz (2007), see Widmann 2008.

2006, 29; Open Society Institute 2010, 22). Surveys show that Muslims strongly identify both with their country of residence and with their religious identity (Gallup 2009, 19).

One can assume that European Muslims see the Holocaust as being less central to their history than other events. In comparison to the majority of other Europeans whose parents or grandparents lived in Europe during the Second World War, the discourses within Muslim families are generally less influenced by either their family history during WWII or by a collective feeling of guilt. However, the persecution of Jews by the National Socialists and their collaborators was not limited to Europe. The majority of European Muslims come from countries such as Turkey, or from North African and South-East Asian countries that only played a minor role in the Holocaust and from which no or relatively few Jews were deported to German death camps in Eastern Europe. Bosnia is the exception to this rule: most Bosnian Jews were murdered (Gilbert 2002, 75), often in collaboration with the Muslim population. However, the history of Albania shows that some Muslims played an extraordinary role in saving Jews from deportation despite the German occupation between 1943 and 1944 (Gershman 2008), while others collaborated with the National Socialists in the persecution of Jews.[8] Many Muslim countries in North Africa and South-East Asia were colonised by Great Britain or France. This had the effect of making Nazi propaganda partially successful as an ideology of resistance against the colonising powers. The case of European Muslims from North Africa and "their" history vis-à-vis Nazism and the Holocaust is complex. In fact, the four Maghreb countries were directly concerned with Nazism and the prolegomena to the Shoah, to varying extents. In Tunisia, a country which was occupied by the Germans for a few months in 1942–1943, forced labour camps for Jews were constructed and the deportations of Jewish Tunisians to extermination camps started during that period. This was met with complacency by the "indigenous" population. Being part of France. Algeria implemented antisemitic racial measures ordered by Pétain, as was the case throughout the national territory. This was actively supported by the local French population and passively by the Muslim population. Since the 1942 allied landing in Algiers prevented the German occupation, there were no deportations out of Algeria. However, Algerian Jews residing in France were deported and exterminated, in particular those living in the South (Marseille, Perpignan, Bordeaux). Many were taken because Muslim auxiliaries informed the national police or the military that they were Jews, just on the basis of distinguishing their family names from Muslim family names. On the other hand, the King of Morocco was commanded by the French protectorate authorities to distinguish the country's Jews by the use of some physical marker, but he refused. As far as Libya is concerned, it was the setting for very important military operations (for example, Tobrouk, El Alamein) and Libyan Jews were deported to different camps in and outside of Libya, under Italian occupation (Roumani 2008). Finally, the French

[8] For a debate on the role of Arab Muslims during the Holocaust, see: Satloff (2006), Cüppers and Mallmann (2006), Nordbruch (2009), Metzger (2007).

army for the liberation of the territory, commonly known as the "Army of Africa", counted many "indigenous" Muslims among its ranks,[9] most of whom originated from three of the Maghreb countries in particular. Therefore, the Muslim populations of the Maghreb, under French jurisdiction to varying extents, were all directly implemented in this world conflict for diverse reasons; some due to the fact that they were occupied by the Germans, and others had young men who were enlisted in the French army and/or were being held as prisoners in Germany (Allouche-Benayoun and Doris 1998; Borgel 2007; Ghez 2009).

Despite these historical ties, denial and minimisation of the Holocaust is widespread today in the mainstream of many of European Muslims' "home" countries, which is analysed in Chaps. 5 and 6 by Esther Webman and Rıfat N. Bali.[10] The Holocaust is often portrayed in an antisemitic way as a tool used by Israel; conspiracy theories about alleged Nazi-Zionist collaboration are widespread and Israel is equated with Nazi Germany.

The level of open Holocaust denial observed in some mass media in Muslim-majority countries is not accepted in European countries, as demonstrated by the case of the Turkish daily *Vakit*, which was printed and distributed in Germany until 2005 when it was banned by the German authorities for its denial of the Holocaust, as well as for its antisemitic propaganda.[11] The *Vakit* case also demonstrates that some European Muslims are influenced by biased views about the Holocaust propagated by media from their "home" country.

However, there are encouraging, new developments in some countries, particularly in Morocco. The Moroccan king publicly spoke of the importance of Holocaust commemoration for the first time in March 2009, and independent from the monarchy, a group of Moroccan educators and activists visited Yad Vashem in Israel for the first time in 2009 (Maddy-Weitzman 2010). Subsequently, in March 2011, teachers and educators from Morocco participated in a seminar at the Mémorial de la Shoah in Paris, led by Samia Essabaa, a teacher at a professional college in a suburb of Paris, and also the person who initiated a programme for college students with migrant backgrounds to take trips to Auschwitz (Essabaa and Azouvi 2009). Moreover, the Aladdin Project launched a first-time series of public lectures on the Holocaust in Muslim countries in 2010 (Projet Aladin 2010). Also, Turkish state television TRT started to air the film *Shoah* by Claude Lanzmann on 26 January 2012 in its entirety.

This volume focuses on perceptions of the Holocaust among Muslims in European societies; exploring sources, factors of influence and discussing the challenges for education and remembrance in Europe's increasingly multicultural societies.

[9] In le Monde.fr on September 27, 2006, Benjamin Stora estimated that there were 300,000 "indigenous" people in the Army of Liberation who landed in Provence, making up 23% of the total (Stora 2006).

[10] See also Litvak and Webman (2009) and Bali (2009).

[11] Some of the antisemitic articles and cartoons in *Vakit* have been documented in Kreuzberger Initiative gegen Antisemitismus (2004).

George Bensoussan opens up this collection with his essay on the development of perceptions of the Holocaust in Europe since 1945, when the "opponents of the Enlightenment" disappeared without a trace and were reduced to the Nazi Party and a group of criminals and psychopaths who had surrounded Hitler, obfuscating the fact that a major part of Germany shared their ideology. These initial false perceptions gave way to a number of myths that are still relevant today; Bensoussan names the myth of alleged victims' passivity, the narrative that the State of Israel was born out of the Shoah and the concept of totalitarianism which denies the specificity of the Shoah and Nazism. He describes the transition from silence about the Holocaust after the Second World War to the current centrality of the Holocaust. His particular French perspective, set against a laïc background, sharpens the problem of conceptualising the victim group as a result of the irrationality of antisemitism and the Holocaust: why were the JEWS persecuted? Due to the fact that, with only a few exceptions, the whole of Europe was involved in the crime of the Holocaust, this history contributes to European unity. The Holocaust is rejected, but it is also a source of secondary antisemitism. Bensoussan sees this as being one of the main sources of the vilification of Israel today. In the Arab world, however, empathy in regards to the Shoah is a source of frustration and seen as a concession to "the Jews", including Israelis. Bensoussan offers a number of explanations for the current ignorance and anti-Israeli and antisemitic sentiments among Muslims and Arabs.

Juliane Wetzel examines the relationship between the persistence of antisemitism after 1945 and Holocaust remembrance. She discusses that despite there being a taboo against open antisemitism, precisely because of Auschwitz, feelings of guilt led to the phenomenon of antisemitism – so called secondary antisemitism – exposing a failure to come to terms with the past and resulting in Holocaust denial and the minimisation of the Holocaust. The trivialisation of the Holocaust, demonstrated by the comparison of Israel to Nazi Germany and antisemitic tropes such as "Jews talk too much about the Holocaust", as well as the reversal of perpetrators and victims in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, has become a widespread phenomenon across Europe. The Middle East conflict has become a backdrop for the projection of antisemitic sentiments, often related to the Holocaust. These feelings can be expressed even by those who present themselves as anti-antisemites and anti-racists. This leads to challenges in Holocaust education, even more so in classrooms with a significant number of students with migrant backgrounds whose parents came to Europe after the Shoah. Myths about the Holocaust are prominent not only in Arab media but also on the Internet. Wetzel highlights the difficulty of respecting the singularity of the Holocaust with regard to other atrocities and totalitarian regimes.

Michael Whine presents an overview of the participation of European Muslim organisations in Holocaust commemorations. The Holocaust is viewed by many Muslims, particularly Arabs, as a European tragedy which led to negative implications and suffering in the Arab world through the creation of the State of Israel. The Holocaust is therefore often related to the Nakba. Whine's analysis focuses on Muslims' participation in Holocaust commemoration on the Holocaust Memorial Day, local initiatives in schools, Jewish-Muslim dialogue and the reaction of Muslim students to Holocaust education in school. Whine acknowledges that Muslims played only a minor part as victims or perpetrators during the Holocaust, but he argues that

the rejection of Holocaust commemoration as a form of Zionist propaganda is an adoption of Islamist and Arab nationalist antisemitism. Whine presents a case study of the Muslim Council of Britain that illustrates this kind of reaction to the Holocaust Memorial Day. However, he also presents examples of a more constructive approach by other organisations, individual Muslims and approaches to education in the UK, France, Austria, Switzerland, Norway, Germany and the Netherlands.

Esther Webman provides an historical overview of Arab perceptions of the Holocaust from 1945 to today. She shows that there was indeed empathy with the Jewish victims of the Holocaust immediately after the war and gives heartening examples from empathetic literary fiction. However, even in these early stages, before the creation of the State of Israel which led to the foundations of the subsequent discourse on the Holocaust in Arab countries, dealing with the Holocaust was often mixed with negative feelings about Jewish immigration to Palestine. Webman describes the prominent standpoint in the Arab discourse, which claims that the Arabs had and still have to pay "the price" of losing Palestine to the Jews because of the Holocaust, although they took no part in it. She delineates the development of a new emerging discourse which acknowledges the Holocaust and leaves outright Holocaust denial more and more to Islamists. Nevertheless, the mainstream discourse still minimises the Holocaust and connects the discourse about the Holocaust with a delegitimisation of Israel and Zionism.

Rıfat N. Bali analyses the perceptions of the Holocaust in Turkey. In general, the history of the Holocaust is largely ignored in Turkey and rarely part of any school curriculum. Nevertheless, Bali shows that the Holocaust is frequently used as a reference point and in a context unique to Turkey – without a deeper understanding or interest in its history. Commentators in Turkey often insist on the uniqueness of the genocide of the Jews primarily in order to reject dealing with the Armenian genocide. The Holocaust is generally accepted as an historical truth and Holocaust denial (namely, the framing of the Holocaust as an alleged lie fabricated by "the Jews" or "the Zionists") is rather confined to Islamists but rarely challenged. However, a common trope in Turkey is the accusation that the alleged preoccupation with the Holocaust in the West is a result of propaganda by the "Jewish lobby" on behalf of Israel, which is allegedly committing genocide against the Palestinian people.

Philip Spencer and Sara Valentina Di Palma analyse and compare reactions to the Holocaust Memorial Day in the UK and Italy. Since the inception of Holocaust Memorial Day, the event and its focus have come under considerable attack from a number of quarters, particularly (although by no means exclusively) from some sections of Muslim communities. This chapter provides an analysis of some of the advanced arguments and the extent to which they reflect a growing and wider reluctance to acknowledge the centrality of antisemitism to the Holocaust in both the UK and Italy. It suggests that this may be connected to a re-articulation of antisemitism in a new context, which both risks silencing survivors anew and is counterproductive to thinking about the problem of genocide today.

Evelien Gans examines the roots of the slogan 'Hamas Hamas, all Jews to the gas' which has been shouted in the Netherlands during recent demonstrations, often by individuals of Muslim heritage. It shows an unsettling perception of the Holocaust which is clearly antisemitic. Gans asks what has happened to the memory of the gas

chambers used to murder European Jewry. She demonstrates how slogans linking gas and Jews go back a long time in the Netherlands' post-war history. Gans traces the globalisation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the impact of its one-sided and often false portrayal in the media on the streets of the Netherlands and other European countries. The continuation of (secondary) antisemitism in the Netherlands and a very particular "pornographic" form of antisemitism leads to strange reactions and relations to Muslim antisemitism which Gans exemplifies with the case of Theo van Gogh and Geert Wilders.

Günther Jikeli presents research based on in-depth interviews with 117 young male Muslims from Berlin, Paris and London. Their views reveal a number of patterns of thinking regarding the Holocaust and related issues. Knowledge about the Holocaust is limited; there is however a core knowledge about its victims and perpetrators which is shared by most interviewees. Jikeli shows that perceptions of the Holocaust are influenced by views of Jews. Hence antisemitic views shape distorted views of the Holocaust, such as minimising the Holocaust, drawing inappropriate comparisons, outright Holocaust denial or even the approval of the Holocaust. The use of the term Holocaust as an empty metaphor is the result of a lack of understanding or acknowledgement of the specificity of the Holocaust and the drawing of inappropriate comparisons invites the minimisation of the Holocaust. This chapter demonstrates that equating Jews with Nazis or today's Palestinians with Jews in the past is motivated by antisemitism and shaped by a Manichean view of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. By contrast, a lack of hatred against Jews facilitates not only a condemnation of the atrocities of the Holocaust, which most interviewees exhibit, but also enables empathy with its Jewish victims – regardless of the level of previous historical knowledge.

Monique Eckmann discusses an experimental exchange programme between Israeli Jews and Palestinians from Israel based on the educational concepts of Peace Education and Holocaust Education. The programme brought the participants together to deal with the history and the memory of the Holocaust, as well as with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Nakba. An analysis of interviews conducted with the participants leads us to inquire into the relation between identity and the perception of the Other and the difficulties and dilemmas faced by the participants when dealing together with the history and the memory of the Holocaust. Eckmann discusses the possible objectives and limits of such a project, as well as the necessary conditions for the emergence of a culture of mutual recognition, without negating the asymmetrical character of the prevailing situation, nor comparing suffering, nor equating historical facts. She demonstrates that focusing on perpetrators and bystanders, rather than on victims, can produce common insights for both sides.

Remco Ensel and Annemarike Stremmelaar critically discuss the debate in the Netherlands about resistance to Holocaust education among Muslim students. They observed a series of Holocaust lessons in secondary education at Amsterdam schools focusing on an extra-curriculum teaching project with peer educators who teach about the Holocaust and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Leaving aside the discussions about the combination of the two themes within one course, they analyse what happened during the lessons. Somewhat surprisingly, there is less enthusiasm for

discussion of the Middle East conflict. Similar to Jikeli's findings, Ensel and Stremmelaar note the existence of an alternative "narrative" about the role of Jews in history that includes antisemitic attitudes. However, slogans, songs and associations with anti-Jewish references are often used in a provocative way. The authors strongly advocate for the entire "speech act" to be taken into consideration, pointing to the difficulties in finding out what is actually said in the classroom. It remains difficult for teachers to decide which remarks and behaviours can be tolerated and which are "over the edge".

Mehmet Can, Karoline Georg and Ruth Hatlapa explore how the traditional German perception of the remembrance of the Shoah, as well as existing educational concepts to learn about or to learn from crimes of National Socialism, are challenged by the fact that Germany is an immigration country where a variety of historical narratives exists. They argue that the traditional educational approach to this part of German history is in effect exclusionary to people with migrant backgrounds. Their paper deals with three main questions: (1) What mechanisms of exclusion exist in the common forms of teaching and remembering the Shoah in Germany? (2) What forms of access to the history of the Shoah are available to young Muslims and what forms of reference do they use in their discussion of it? (3) How can educational concepts provide wider accessibility to learning about National Socialist crimes while embracing the complexity of a modern migration society?

The contributions to this volume come from all across Europe and beyond and provide abundant evidence of a new form of antisemitism which is being structured around the memory of the Shoah. To such an extent, in fact, that we can consider some discourses on the Shoah as indicators of current antisemitism, which paradoxically use the mass assassination of Jews in order to recycle old antisemitic clichés. The Holocaust is instrumentalised (to express antisemitism) and the demonstrations for its remembrance backfire on Jews: if people are talking about the Holocaust then it is because Jews are in charge of the media and have a lot of power.

Parts of the European Muslim population groups are subjected to "double bind" logic: on one hand, they are influenced by discourses disseminated in their country of origin which minimise or obscure the Shoah (Pierre-André Taguieff 2010), and which, in assigning exclusive responsibility to Christian countries, expand for some the myth of the golden age of a hypothetical "Jewish-Arab symbiosis". At the same time, there is a violently anti-Zionist discourse whose argumentation is saturated with antisemitic clichés and conspiracy theories and the notion that Jews and Muslims are supposedly eternal enemies is widespread. This may be one of the reasons for a relatively high level of antisemitic attitudes among many Muslims in Europe and thereby negatively influenced views of the Holocaust.[12] On the other

[12] Surveys show higher levels of antisemitic attitudes among Muslims compared to non-Muslims in Europe (The Living History Forum 2004, 45, 135–136; The Pew Global Attitudes Project 2006, 42–43; Brettfeld and Wetzels 2007, 274–275; Elchardus 2011; Frindte et al. 2012, 245–247). For a debate on anti-Jewish attitudes among Muslims in Europe and "new antisemitism", see also Jikeli (2012), Bergmann and Wetzel (2003), Klug (2003), Wieviorka (2007).

hand, European Muslims live in societies which, at least in official discourses, assume responsibility for the massacring of Jews, recognise the State of Israel and condemn statements which deny the Shoah and/or are openly antisemitic.[13]

However, anti-Zionist discourses are becoming increasingly popular in the mainstream of European societies: the image of the Jews as the absolute victims in the Holocaust is changing or being complemented in a way by the image of the Jews as Zionists as being the absolute evil. "The Palestinians", on the other hand, are seen as the innocent victims (of the Jews) – an image that invites identification. Muslims have an additional dimension of identification with "the Palestinians" via their common religious identity. However, perceptions of the Shoah are influenced by perceptions of Jews and collective identifications among European populations, Muslim or otherwise.

Collective identification by members of the European mainstream societies might lead to feelings of guilt and to resenting Jews for the Holocaust; it might even trigger the wish to identify Jews as being evil today. Muslims' collective identifications might lead to negative views of Jews and Israel and therefore to a reluctance to acknowledge that the National Socialists were engaged in a murderous war against every single Jew, leading to the murder of 6 million Jews and the near annihilation of European Jewry. A true acknowledgement of that fact prohibits any equation to recent conflicts and surely to the Middle East conflict. However, perceptions are only partially influenced by historical facts.

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[13] For example, in France, since the 1960s: the cases of Rassinier, Faurisson, Garaudy and recently, Dieudonné.

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