

Antisemitism – from ancient times to the post-9/11 world



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hand-out for participants

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Why anti-Semitism is not just a 'prejudice' or 'simple' racism, and why especially scholars in genocide studies fail to understand the unprecedented crimes of the Shoah

1) From “Judeophobia” to anti-Judaism to Antisemitism

- Pagan, Roman, Greek, Persian and Egypt polytheism against monotheism of the Jews
- Jewish rejection of Jesus Christ as Messiah / Christian anti-Judaism: among other aspects: hearing the “word of god” for Christians instead of reading the universal law in Judaism
- Islam introduces “a sign” to wear for Jews and Christians 717
- Fourth Lateran Council 1215 has several anti-Jewish rules, e.g. the wearing of the yellow role
- Crusades

- Islam forces Jews of Grenada to wear the “yellow shred” ca. 1320
- Expulsion of the Jews from England 1290, Spain 1492
- Protestant anti-Judaism: Martin Luther 1543 “The Jews and their lies”, therefore Jews do not work, they prefer leisure time, suggesting to set a blaze on synagogues etc.
- French Revolution 1789: liberté, fraternité, égalité. Good ideas, but for Jews not without contradictions, because Jews as a nation have no rights, just as individual believers

The rise of “modern” anti-Semitism

- 1) race theories, Gobineau, Chamberlain
- 2) term anti-Semitism; most popular first user: Wilhelm Marr 1879
- 3) Conspiracy theories; Dreyfus-affair in France 1894-1906; most important: The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, first edition in Russia in 1905, today reprinted in a lot of Muslim countries, second best selling book, after the Koran

2) Holocaust

- 1) Specific anti-Semitic political culture of Germany: “The creation of the German nation against the Jews” since the 19th century”

Difference of German anti-Semitism which led to the Holocaust and Russian or Eastern European pogrom anti-Semitism: the latter did not tend to eradicate all Jews! Germans, on the other side, did look for every single Jew they could find in Greece, Lithuania, Russia, France or Yugoslavia

- 2) Holocaust is an unprecedented crime in world history. Never before and never again has a people been killed because of just being that people – Six million Jews have been killed for no purpose, but of their simple existence as Jews – see Daniel J. Goldhagens PhD: Hitler’s willing executioners, 1996

3) Hatred against the “chosen people” – Spaniards, Portugese, and finally Germans wanted to become the chosen...

4) “Why we watched” (Prof. Theodore Hamerow, 2008): Antisemitism in the US during the 1930s and 1940s; an example from New York City: Prof. William Prusoff

3) Specific topics of anti-Semitism/three important anti-Jewish images:

Ahasver, Mammon, and Moloch

1) Ahasver, the “eternal Jew”, a topic since 1602 until today. Story: the Jew Ahasver did refuse Jesus to make a break with his cross in the back, therefore Jesus decided “the Jews” have to wander without ending...

2) Mammon, the “Jewish God of money”, saying that Jews are devoted to money and nothing else. Anti-capitalist anti-Semitism of today very often derives of that image of Mammon – example: rally of 30.000 people in Switzerland 2003, Jews and Rumsfeld portrayed as worshipping the “Golden calf”

3) Moloch and the “Blood libel” – Jews are accused of killing every year for Pessah a Christian (or Muslim) child, using its blood for making Matzah – this is shown e.g. in videos of Muslim anti-Semitism today

Explanations:

A) Psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud used the term “Projection”, saying that people project their own view, needs or obsessions to others – often to “the other”, “the Jew”. For example: Jews are accused of the Blood Libel, even though Christians (and Muslims) know, that Jews do not even like bloody meat. So they project their own obsession of blood onto the Jews

B) Separating capitalism in something good (production of goods like cars or chewing gum) and something bad (Wall Street, financial sphere etc.) is dangerous and anti-Semitic. Jews are accused of being responsible for the financial crisis, even though it is obviously a crisis of the whole system, all around the world! 9/11 is proof that anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism are twins

4) New anti-Semitism after the Holocaust

Mixture of four elements: right-wing, left-wing, mainstream and Islamic anti-Semitism

- Since 1948 Arab and Muslim rejection of the Jewish state
- Anti-Zionist agitation in Eastern Europe, USSR, Poland, Tschechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic and other countries
- Increase of new anti-Semitism since six day war 1967 and especially since the second Intifada of the Palestinians in September 2000 and even worse after 9/11, 2001, as anti-Zionism is fueled with hatred against Jews from mostly these four sources. In Europe countries like Spain or Germany believe Israel is the “biggest danger to world peace”

– **The core problem today: The Iranian threat and Muslim/Islamic antisemitism.**

Iran wants to produce a nuclear bomb, and simultaneously says that Israel has to be wiped of the map. Even worse: a lot of academics join the Muslim, but also left-wing or right wing anti-Semitism by backing conferences of Iran entitled “A World without Zionism”... This is the new anti-Semitism, a threat to Israel and the Jews in an unprecedented way since 1945!!!

- The problematic politics of the United Nations (UN), like the Durban conference in 2001 and the Durban two conference (in Geneva, Switzerland) in April 2009

- Anti-Semitic rallies all around the world, Muslims but also left wingers and right wingers and even Jewish groups, including rallies in San Francisco, Fort Lauderdale, New Haven, in the last weeks in regard of Israel's war of defense against genocidal Hamas in Gaza

5) Trivialization of the Holocaust

This is called "secondary anti-Semitism", like the new anti-Semitism also a form of Jew hatred after 1945. The equation of "Islamophobia" with anti-Semitism is part of the strategy to relativize the crimes of the Holocaust.

Remember: The Shoah is not a "genocide among others".

To claim, Germans have also been "victims" of the Nazis, is also anti-Semitic because it denies the fact that Germans have been willing executioners.

- Saying the Hitler Youth was a good thing, because it was a sign of passionate people, like Reverend Rick Warren did on April 17, 2005, is also part of anti-Semitism after Auschwitz, because it denies the impact of those "passionate" Germans in brown shirts. Other examples:
- PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals): they compare the Holocaust with life stock farming, this is an anti-Semitic trivialization of Treblinka and all other concentration camps
- German philosopher Martin Heidegger (one of the most influential thinkers of the 20. Century) said in 1949 ("Bremen lectures") that "agriculture is nowadays a motorized nutritional industry, by nature the same as the production of corpses in gas chambers (...)"
- Other, more recent examples of trivialization of the Holocaust: terms like "Holocaust of expulsion", or "Bombing Holocaust", both saying that poor Germans have been victims of World War II LIKE the Jews
- Comparing the Shoah with other "genocides", as for example Prof. Ben Kiernan does, he is founding director of the Yale Genocide Studies

Program, is very problematic. To say there is a “China’s Holocaust” and to say behind every genocide was an economic (mostly agricultural) purpose, denies the specificity of the Shoah. It denies the senselessness of the destruction of the European Jews – people who do not read German should be careful in comparing Blut und Boden (“Blood and Soil”) with almost every “imperialist” action since the ancient times. It denies the unprecedented racial and eliminationist anti-Semitism of Germany and rejects to remember the Holocaust as a specific crime – this sort of anti-Semitism, a soft-core denial of the Holocaust, is most fashionable and a lot of ‘scholars’ are supporting this kind of research (“Islamophobia=Antisemitism”, Blacks=Jews, Indians=Jews, Canadian natives=Jews, Australian Aboriginies=Jews etc. etc.)

- See also the criticism of that “struggle of victimhood” of Prof. Dina Porat, Tel Aviv University
- Very important for criticism of the ‘comparative model’: Bernard-Henri Lévy “Left in Dark times”

Remember, again: even scholars who remember the Holocaust are often producing anti-Semitic views, like anti-Zionist hatred of Israel – example: Steven Beller “Antisemitism. A Very Short introduction”, Oxford 2007, writing at the end: “the answer to antisemitism is ultimately not a Jewish state”....

I wanted to show in this short overview that anti-Semitism is a very complex phenomenon. It is by far the longest hatred (term of Israeli historian Prof. Robert Wistrich) – anti-Semitism is more than “simple” prejudice, it is a whole worldview, an ideology with genocidal consequences (Shoah) and intentions (Ahmadinejad/Iran, Arab and Muslim anti-Semitism and their Western friends).

DOCUMENTATION OF AN ANTISEMITIC CARTOON – made by Pat Oliphant, “the

most widely syndicated political cartoonist in the world,
Published on the Homepage of the Terrorist Organization Hezbollah
(<http://www.hizbollah.tv/caricature.php>) – FIRST published, though, in the
NEW YORK TIMES, Washington Post and other daily newspapers, March 2009!!!!

