

# Is Quentin Tarantino an Antisemite?

By Dr. Clemens Heni, author of Antisemitism: A Specific Phenomenon. Holocaust Trivialization – Islamism – Post-colonial and cosmopolitan anti-Zionism

Antisemitism is a very flexible ideology. We know of Islamist antisemitism, the Iranian threat, Arab antisemitism, left-wing, right-wing and mainstream anti-Zionist European antisemitism. We also know of anti-Judaism and hatred of the circumcision and of ritual slaughter, for example.

A couple of days ago, American film director Spike Lee accused his colleague, film director, screen writer and actor Quentin Tarantino of distorting American history and slavery in his new film "Django Unchained." For Lee the film is rather racist, or portrays slavery in a mild light. Lee will not watch the film, he says. Tarantino thinks of himself as the leading American film producer of our time.

Promoting his film in Berlin, Tarantino responded indirectly to Spike Lee and said: "America is responsible for two Holocausts: for the destruction of native Americans and for the slavery of African Americans."

Leading German daily, Sueddeutsche Zeitung, known for promoting the anti-Zionist antisemitism of Nobel Prize Laureate Günter Grass earlier this year, happily quoted Tarantino accusing America of "two Holocausts." Tarantino's Austrian actor Christoph Waltz just was awarded a Golden Globe for his role in Django Unchained and Waltz is not known as a critic of Holocaust distortion Tarantinostyle.

Accusing America of genocide is among the best known anti-

American tropes worldwide. In Germany (FRG), there was a remarkable increase in promoting this trope right after the screening of TV series Holocaust in January 1979. Blaming the West and America for just another genocide or Holocaust was most welcome by many Germans. Psychoanalytic theory calls this a projection of guilt.

As we know, the Holocaust was an unprecedented crime. Many historians of the Holocaust emphasize the unprecedented character of it, including historian and Jewish studies scholar Steven T. Katz from Boston University.

The Holocaust is unique. Never before were there the intent and the policies to kill an entire people. Germans wanted to kill the Jews – and they destroyed European Jewry by killing six million Jews. For the first time in history gas chambers were part of an industry of destruction. The German railway system was used for deportations of Jews from far away countries like Greece. Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in particular (in fact, even before), Germans developed a specific form of German antisemitism aimed at the destruction of Jews. Jews were seen as the “eternal Jew,” Ahasver, as working on a world conspiracy, as being behind capitalism (“Mammon,” the supposedly Jewish god of money!) and communism, liberalism, modernity, urban cities, free forms of sexuality and the like. The Russian forgery The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, first distributed around 1905, became crucial for Hitler’s antisemitic ideology, too. Since the Middle Ages blood Libels have been a typical Christian tool and, since 1840 and the Damascus Affair, an increasingly Christian Arab, as well as Muslim and Islamist tool to spread Jew-hatred. Today Jews are accused of killing innocent Christian or Muslim children for religious purposes.

All these genocidal features are missing when we look at colonialism, slavery, and racism. Jews are seen as superior, not as inferior like native Americans, Blacks, or slaves. Jews

were seen as a dangerous force behind all kinds of evil. Africans were subject to horrible crimes in modern times, but those crimes were far from genocide. The Arab-Islamic slave trade and the European-American slave trade used Africans as a cheap labor. Exploitation was the reason behind slavery and racism, and the allegedly superior Arabs or Whites were behind it.

On the other side, exploitation was neither the reason nor the result of the Holocaust. The (German) will to destroy Jewry was behind the Shoah. Destruction ruled, not exploitation or racist rule over a group of people. German did not just want to rule over Jews, they wanted to kill them and they did kill them. Not so in slavery, colonialism, or racism. The history of native Americans was also horrible, but far from genocide. There was never the intention of European settlers to kill the entire native population. Rather diseases caused much of the destruction of native peoples. Historian, theorist and critic of capitalism, Karl Marx, called this "primitive accumulation." Primitive accumulation is based on violence, direct violence and murder. The Holocaust, though, is completely distinct from that. There was no *cui bono* in the Shoah.

The *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* mentions historian David Stannard as a "serious" source to back Tarantino's claim about America having committed Holocausts. However, Stannard, is not a serious historian. I deal with him in my new book, *Antisemitism: A Specific Phenomenon. Holocaust Trivialization – Islamism – Post-colonial and Cosmopolitan anti-Zionism*. Stannard promotes the anti-American and antisemitic Holocaust-distorting trope of the Holocaust of native Americans in the US. Stannard is also a friend of author and agitator Ward Churchill, infamous for framing the entire history of the US as an ongoing genocide or "Holocaust" (since 1492) and for calling of the 9/11 victims "little Eichmanns." (The two notorious studies from these two 'historians' are David E.

Stannard (1992): *American holocaust: Columbus and the conquest of the New World*, New York: Oxford University Press and Ward Churchill (1997): *A Little Matter of Genocide. Holocaust and Denial in the Americas 1492 to the Present*, San Francisco: City Lights Books.)

American journalist and columnist for the German weekly *Die Zeit*, Tuvia Tenenbom, reported in his book *I Sleep in Hitler's Room* (which became a German bestseller, *Allein unter Deutschen*) about a brother-in-mind of Tarantino, the gardener of a lovely and very trendy restaurant vis-à-vis the house of the Wannsee-Conference in Berlin. When Tenenbom asked about the strange people who love to marry and to have lunches at the House Sanssouci Restaurant, the gardener responded: "And you killed the Indians!"

Tarantino promotes the very same antisemitic ideology. He distorts the Holocaust by framing American history as even worse than German history. Two holocausts for the US, and just one for Germany in this antisemitic, though very fashionable view.

Hurting Jewish Holocaust survivors and their relatives and all other people who remember the worst crime of mankind ever, the Shoah, is the result if not the intent of Quentin Tarantino. He praises the Germans for their kind of Holocaust remembrance while accusing America of being unable and unwilling to confront their own history.

There was and there is racism in the US, yes, even after the end of slavery and segregation. This has to be confronted on a daily basis. But there were not two holocausts in American history. Neither native Americans nor African Americans were killed intentionally on a genocidal level. Rather, exploitation, the spread of diseases, and European-American chauvinism and racism were prevalent.

The obsession to downplay, obfuscate, distort and even

universalize the Holocaust has to stop. Quentin Tarantino is just another candidate, one of the first one in 2013, for the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Top Ten Antisemitic/anti-Israel Slurs. Holocaust distortion and Holocaust universalization are very widespread and serious forms of antisemitism. Those who forget or distort the past won't support the Jewish state of Israel in the future. Quentin Tarantino is not a ground-breaker in this regard; he merely echoes the German and European (as well as American) anti-Americanism and antisemitism of the cultural elite.