

# Why Prof. Wolfgang Benz is headed in the wrong direction

What is the focus? Why the JEWS or WHY the Jews?

The Berlin Center for Research on Anti-Semitism (ZfA)

equates

Islamophobia with anti-Semitism

—

Why Prof. Wolfgang Benz is headed in the wrong direction

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Probably the most disturbing, aggressive, and offensive anti-Semitic rallies in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany occurred in January 2009. As the Israeli military answered several years of launching rockets into Israeli territory from the Hamas-Gaza strip, Muslims and their friends screamed “Death to the Jews”, no “Holocaust in Gaza”, “Boycott Israel” and so on in German streets. At one of these rallies in the city of Duisburg, the German police illegally entered an apartment of two students in order to confiscate two Israeli flags hung from the balcony and bedroom as a protest

against the rise of anti-Semitism. Some 10,000 aggressive demonstrators, mostly Muslim (Germans), urged the police on. This was again a watershed moment in the political culture of Germany. To allow people to scream (whether in Arabic, Turkish, or German) "Death to the Jews", or "Olmert is the son of a dog" (as happened at a rally in Berlin), and not to allow an Israeli flag peacefully placed in the angle of a bedroom window is a sign of that change. Muslim extremism is obviously on the rise; Jews and their friends are the target. We are talking about Germany, Europe and the world in January 2009.

Is this a sign of what has become fashionable as "Islamophobia"?

A few weeks before those rallies, an event in Germany shed light on the current trend to play down anti-Semitism, while ignoring the sharp rise in genocidal threats to Jews and the state of Israel, in particular the existential threat from Iran and its nuclear program. The Center for Research on Anti-Semitism (ZfA) of the Technical University in Berlin, one of the four existing centers dealing specifically with anti-Semitism,[1] held a conference on December 8, 2008 on the "concept of the enemy Muslim – concept of the enemy Jew".

The ZfA is a very influential institution with two full professors (Prof. Wolfgang Benz, historian and director, and sociologist Prof. Werner Bergmann), more than 50 doctoral candidates, three assistants, one academic co-worker, and over 15 employees working on various projects, not including seven fellows in an academic project dealing with anti-Semitism in Europe from 1879 until 1914.

Benz is known for some important works on Nazi Germany and right-wing extremism in the FRG alike. In my PhD for example I quoted Benz in a long paragraph of an article of his in a book he edited in 1980, dealing with right-wing extremism and the downplaying of the Holocaust. Benz correctly opposed equating the crimes against native Americans and the Holocaust, as had

become fashionable after the screening of the TV series 'Holocaust' in January 1979.[2] Benz also co-edited another important book, an encyclopaedia of National Socialism, first published in 1997.[3] Also this handbook I am referring to in my PhD.[4]

Benz' criticism of National Socialism and right-wing extremism after 1945, though, might also be the reason he appears blind to the danger from the left and the Muslim world, or Muslims in Western countries after 9/11. In my view scholars must try to combine criticism of right-wing extremism with criticism of left-wing extremism and the Muslim world, as well as of Christian anti-Semitism and the history of anti-Semitism as a whole, from ancient (Greek-Roman) pagan times[5] to our contemporary world.

Just focusing on the right is not helpful. I wrote my PhD about right-wing extremism, I obviously see the big danger of that ideology. But no one should downplay other forms of anti-Semitism (and anti-Americanism, and nationalism). The actions against Israel and the Jews of today, including rallies in the United States,[6] are not organized by Neo-Nazis, but by the left and the Muslim world. In effect, the mainstream of Europe is tolerating or appeasing Islamic Jihad.

In the announcement for the ZfA conference the organizers write that the "paradigm" of accusations against the Muslims are known from the "history of anti-Semitism". This was the first hint that the conference would equate anti-Semitism with Islamophobia.

Most of the lectures had been published before in the Institute yearbook.[7] For Angelika Königseder, member of the ZfA, the Jyllands-Posten Muhammad cartoons controversy in 2005/2006 is described as pure "hatred"[8] on the part of those Danish cartoonists. Peter Widmann, also an essential member of the ZfA, accused Henryk M. Broder of being a "discourse strategist of the right".[9] While Königseder and

Widmann at least tried to follow scholarly standards, another contributor to the conference, Yasemin Shooman, focused mainly on one single German Homepage, which was already known before for its racist tendencies against Islam (mostly deriving from the Christian background of that Homepage, "Politically Incorrect"). For her this is proof of how racist and anti-Muslim the www is.[10]

A commentator on Königseder's lecture was Dr. Sabine Schiffer. She is known for writing for an anti-Zionist homepage – anis-online.de.[11] Schiffer consequently downplays the threat from Islamic Jihad. Worse, in an article published in November 2008, she accused German-Jewish publicist Henryk Broder of "demonizing" Muslims as Jews were demonized in Nazi Germany![12] In her PhD Schiffer already equalized the history of anti-Semitism with racism and especially "Islamfeindlichkeit" (hostility against Islam).[13] She equates anti-Semitism with "Islamophobia," trivializing the unprecedented crimes of the Shoah is anti-Semitic. And a person promoting anti-Semitic statements is obviously an anti-Semite, by the way.

Inviting anti-Semites like Schiffer is remarkable for an institution like ZfA of international renown. Prof. Benz is presumably committed to making every effort to demonstrate the high quality of the work done by his institute. Yet Schiffer wrote that it is "unbelievable" that Broder spoke about the threat of a "nuclear Holocaust" committed against Israel by Iran. Why does the ZfA invite a person who denies that genocidal threat? Is the ZfA an institution against anti-Semitism in ALL its forms or has it become an institution which can only see one side of a complex phenomenon? Schiffer's presence, though, is a secondary issue. What about the director of the ZfA himself?

Benz wrote an introduction to his yearbook and also spoke at the beginning of the conference. He started his article with the following lines: "Since September 11, 2001, anti-Islam

resentment is fashionable on a world wide scale. The killing of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh in November 2004 activated emotional reactions, which grew to what we now call Islamophobia.”[14] The focus lies on “Islamophobia” (whatever this means[15]) and not on the victims of Islamic Jihad. This is not just the view of Benz; rather, it has become a mainstream concept in the Western post 9/11 world.

A closer look at some recent ZfA publications is highly suggestive. As early as 2002, in a volume edited by Benz in honor of the 20<sup>th</sup> birthday of the ZfA, he compared the situation of “foreigners (asylum seekers as well as residents)” in Germany of the 1990s with the situation of Jews in the times of crisis at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.[16] Playing down the anti-Semitic ideology of Nazi Germany in an attack on Daniel Goldhagen as Benz and Bergmann do[17] is related to a framework which does not analyze anti-Semitism first, rather all kinds of “prejudices”, like the situation of native Americans in Bolivia or socially deprived people, other examples used in that volume[18]. This is interesting, as Benz himself criticized equating the situation of native Americans and the Holocaust in 1980.[19] Did he forget his own correct analysis of 1980? The ZfA now sees anti-Semitism merely as a “paradigm” for stigmatization, prejudice and discrimination.[20]

Further doubts arise if one analyzes the components of anti-Semitism in relation to “Islamophobia”. An inherent feature of the conference is to equalize or create the moral equivalence of the notion of racism (portrayed as “Islamophobia”) with anti-Semitism. This is a watershed moment in the history of research on anti-Semitism, particularly in post-war or post Holocaust Germany.

Anti-Semitism is something different than forms of pure racism. Jew-hatred is based on significantly different images and ways of thinking: Jews are not below “us” (as the blacks

are typically depicted), rather they are planning a conspiracy to rule the world. Anti-Semitism, in Germany, was the motif for the Holocaust. Those unprecedented crimes combined religious Jew-hatred, race-theories about "the Jew", and modern anti-Semitism in all its forms, including a comprehensive worldview. It is this anti-Semitic ideology which distinguishes anti-Semitism from racism.

As early as 1543, German protestant Martin Luther blamed the Jews for almost every evil on earth. In 1602 the first story about "Ahasver" appeared, a fiction about the "wandering Jew" who refused to let Jesus rest with his cross, and was therefore sent to roam endlessly. This Ahasver-myth is an essential part of hatred of Jews. Blaming Jews for being responsible for capitalism, the "worship for money, or mammon" is another one. "Mammon" became a symbol for "Jewish" power centuries ago, and since the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the image of Mammon is an essential part of anti-Jewish resentments. Another example is the blood libel which evokes the fear of non-Jews of being killed. The 1840 Damascus blood libel was an important step in singling out Jews for being uncivilized, as they were accused of killing innocent children to use their blood for making matzah.[21]

Later, during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Protocols of the Elders of Zion appeared. This Russian forgery had a significant impact on German and European anti-Semitism. Currently, this myth is having a resurgence and a huge and negative effect in the Muslim world.

In the German empire there were so-called "Antisemitenparteien", parties dedicated to spreading Jew-hatred. Furthermore in 1916 there was a "Judenzählung" (counting of the Jewish Soldiers) in the German army during WorldWar I. On December 13, 1934, a new law was passed in Nazi Germany: from that day on Jews were no longer allowed to get a superPhD, the formal prerequisite for becoming a Professor at

University in Germany[22]. Other examples of exclusionary policies against Jews in Germany are too numerous to mention here.[23] Today every individual, including of course all Moslems, who has the ability to study on a University level, can complete a PhD or super PhD. As the ZfA says in its conference announcement, the “paradigm” of accusations against the Muslims is known from the “history of anti-Semitism”. To compare the situation of today’s Muslims in Germany with the situation of the Jews is a denial of the concrete policies of Nazi Germany. It also obscures and trivializes the true situation of Jews during the German Empire (1871-1918), including the first World War, and the Weimar Republic.

As these examples demonstrate, anti-Semitism (in Germany) is based on a worldview, an ideology, which considers Jews to be an evil which has to be eradicated from the earth. Racism, including resentments against Muslims, is not based on such a worldview, rather on the assumption that those people are less worthy than “whites” (whatever that includes or means). Racism has a rational dimension: exploitation was one central purpose it served. Anti-Semitism is totally different. Anti-Semitism is genocidal and has an extremely irrational dimension. To equalize anti-Semitism with racism or even to use the term “Islamophobia”, an invention of the Islamic Republic Iran since 1979, is dangerous.

Furthermore: there are Islamist ideas (or political Islam as such) that advocate the take-over of Europe and the West.[24] Contrary to that there have never been attempts or designs of Jews to say or do that. It is rational to acknowledge these ideas and perhaps to be frightened by them. The only problem that arises is the projection of such views onto every Muslim, as occurs in some openly anti-Islamic circles, rather than in attributing them only to Islamists.

Anti-Semitism is a specific topic. Important research on anti-Semitism concludes that racism, prejudice and anti-Semitism are not equivalent. No single group of people, except for the

Jews, has ever been singled out and blamed simultaneously for mutually exclusive developments like capitalism, communism or liberalism and humanism. For example, the conclusions of the Iranian conference, "A World without Zionism," and the accusations that "the Zionists" were responsible for the recent crisis in Georgia display the pathologic anti-Jewish thinking of Ahmadinejad and anti-Semites in general.

Some simple comparisons demonstrate this fundamental difference between anti-Semitism and "Islamophobia":

- No single Muslim country is singled out as such, or rendered illegitimate because of the religion of its citizens;
- There are no "Protocols of the Elders of Berlin-Kreuzberg" (a neighborhood with many Muslims);
- There is no accusation of Muslims being responsible for capitalism or the economic crisis;
- There is no Blood Libel against the Muslims, blaming them of using the blood of innocent children for religious purposes.

Contrary to that, the history of anti-Semitism shows very clearly:

- Jews and Israel (the "Zionists") are singled out as a people and as a country (see the UN speech of Iran on September 23, 2008, e.g.)
- The Protocols of the Elders of Zion are being reprinted today in the entire Muslim world, including Turkey, Iran and the Arab world
- Jews are being blamed for today's economic crisis of today
- Jews are still accused of the Blood Libel, e.g. in Egypt TV during Ramadan in 2007

Anti-Semitism is a specific ideology which needs serious scholarly research. The equalization of anti-Semitism and



“anti-Muslimism” or “Islamophobia” is wrong, and a sign of the growing “struggle of victimhood” (Dina Porat)[25]. It is the worst ‘answer’ to the threat of Islamic Jihad, which is a threat first to the Jews and Israel, but also – see the Mumbai massacre – for the entire Western world and its allies.

A center for the study of anti-Semitism should be aware of these facts and not equalize anti-Semitism with “Islamophobia” or other forms of “prejudice”. You can overcome a prejudice, anti-Semitism, though, is irrational and genocidal. Talking about “Gruppenbezogene Menschenfeindlichkeit,” (Group focused enmity) as several scholars in Germany do, trivializes anti-Semitism.[26] That kind of postmodern relativist philosophy or political culture is just another way refusing to conduct research on anti-Semitism, seen as a phenomenon *sui generis*. *Sui generis* does not suggest that anti-Semitism evolved outside history and society, but it indicates the unique nature of anti-Semitism which separates it from racial prejudice, or ‘just’ negative byproducts of capitalism, socialism, Christianity, racism, slavery, exploitation, etc.

The way the ZfA reacted to criticism of its controversial conference showed, at the very least, that it had no adequate substantive response to make to the criticism leveled at it. The first reaction of Benz, in early December, when confronted with advance criticism of his conference, was to tell a newspaper that both an Israeli ambassador and the chairwoman of the Jewish community in Berlin stood behind his idea to have a conference on Islamophobia. It turned out a few days later that this was not the case.[27] The ZfA then singled out a Jewish journalist, first ignoring him and refusing to give him interviews, and then saying he acted only from personal motivation – of course money[28] – and therefore produced a “torrent of hatred”[29] for an Israeli journal, only made things worse

The Western world fails day by day by ignoring the genocidal threat deriving of Islamic Jihad. Fashionable philosophy like

that of Italian Giorgio Agamben compares American reactions to Jihad after 9/11 and the situation of some Taliban or other criminals in Guantanamo with the situation of Jews in German concentration camps during the Holocaust.[30] Such anti-Semitic trivialization of the Shoah goes along with the denial of the threat of Muslim anti-Semitism.

German-Jewish author and journalist Henryk M. Broder makes a very strong argument in his confrontation with the ZfA: in his view such centers and a lot of researchers on anti-Semitism can analyze WHY Jews are object of hatred, but they cannot say why JEWS are that object.[31]

That is a crucial point.

The ongoing controversy about the ZfA can help to enlighten the faults of current research on anti-Semitism. Several scholars, politicians, diplomats, writers, media are playing down anti-Semitism and depicting the Muslims of today as victims of Islamophobia, a strategy well orchestrated in the UN as well. Former State Secretary Klaus Faber has pointed this out clearly:

“‘Islamophobia is reaching the level of the anti-Semitism of the 1930s,’ said Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, secretary-general of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in an interview in a Turkish newspaper.”

He goes on in his criticism of the ZfA:

“Anti-Semitism and ‘Islamophobia’ cannot be equated. (...) In Germany, this means police have to protect Jewish kindergardens, schools, institutions and synagogues around the clock. In contrast, anti-Islamic terrorism is virtually non-existent in Europe.

Instead, one finds a close cooperation between aggressive anti-Semitic Islamists and equally anti-Semitic neo-Nazis.”[32]

Jerusalem Post Berlin based correspondent Benjamin Weinthal quotes Charles Small, founder and director of the Yale Initiative for the Interdisciplinary Study of Anti-Semitism, who criticized the ZfA for remaining “silent”:

The lesson of the Holocaust was that silence in the face of injustice was immoral – especially when it comes to genocidal anti-Semitism. The silence among those who understand contemporary anti-Semitism – from Durban II to the Iranian regime’s threat and German economic relations with the regime – to remain silent is most troubling.”[33]

Taking all these facts into account, especially the equation of “Islamophobia” and anti-Semitism, Noah Flug, chairman of the Center of Organizations of Holocaust Survivors and president of the International Auschwitz Committee, says: Germany “must examine and analyze whether it is important to support the center“.[34]

The ZfA is just an example of the failure of today’s academic experts to address contemporary anti-Semitism in an appropriate way. Whether they deal with ancient anti-Semitism[35], Nazi anti-semitism (even before 1933)[36], or Muslim anti-Semitism of today, they all tend to play down anti-Semitism significantly.

The positive outcome of the ZfA conference, however, is the chance for several scholars all over the world to change their framework of research on anti-Semitism (if necessary), in order to get a more accurate view on the “longest hatred” (Robert Wistrich)[37], anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism cannot be compared with “simple” prejudice, racism or even “Islamophobia”, which actually does not exist, either in Germany, or the world. Antisemitism is the most dangerous ideology and worldview. Jews have been singled out for several thousand years now, in an irrational tendency that leads to genocide. To prevent a “second Holocaust”, to use the word of Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel at his speech at YALE Law

School not long ago[38], research on anti-Semitism has to be strengthened. To remain silent during the Gaza war or to play down the anti-Semitic rallies in Germany[39], or even to equate anti-Semitism with “Islamophobia” is inappropriate.

I am not sure, but is there still hope that (not only but especially German) scholars change their framework and conceptualization of anti-Semitism?

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[1] The Berlin center for Research on Anti-Semitism at the Technical University of Berlin was established in 1982. In the same year the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Anti-Semitism (SICSA) at Hebrew University in Jerusalem was established. 1991 the Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Racism and Anti-Semitism was established at Tel Aviv University. Finally, in 2006, the Yale Initiative for the Interdisciplinary Study of Anti-Semitism (YIISA) was created at Yale University.

[2] Clemens Heni (2007): Salonfähigkeit der Neuen Rechten. >Nationale Identität<, Anti-Semitismus und Antiamerikanismus in der politischen Kultur der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1970 – 2005: Henning Eichberg als Exempel, Marburg: Tectum Verlag, pp. 265-266; cf. *ibid.* footnote 1100, the article of Benz is entiteled: „‘Die Blockadebrecher‘. Rechtsextreme Schüler- und Jugendzeitschriften.“

[3] Wolfgang Benz/Hermann Graml/Hermann Weiß (ed.) (1997): Lexikon des Nationalsozialismus, München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag.

[4] E.g. Heni 2007, p. 37, footnote 53.

[5] For an analysis of ancient anti-Semitism see Peter Schäfer (1997): Judeophobia. Attitudes toward the Jews in the Ancient World, Cambridge (Massachusetts)/London (England): Harvard University Press. Schäfer is head of the Department of Jewish Studies at Princeton University. He was the first and only scholar who received the two most prestigious awards in the

humanities („Geisteswissenschaften“) in Germany and the United States of America, the German Leibniz Price (in 1994) and the US Mellon Award (in 2007). For my article most important is his criticism of an essay on ancient anti-Semitism, co-written by Werner Bergmann, one of the two professors at the ZfA. Schäfer says for example: „In a recent article called ‚Kalkül oder ‚Massenwahn‘? Eine soziologische Interpretation der antijüdischen Unruhen in Alexandria 38 n.Chr.‘, Werner Bergmann and Christhard Hoffmann have taken precisely this view against almost all the relevant scholarly literature. Over and over again they insist that we are confronted in Alexandria with ‚real conflicts of interest‘, ‚concrete political competition‘ (...). Anti-Semitism figures in this scenario as the effect of the ‚real conflicts of interest‘ and not as their cause“ (Schäfer 1997, p. 157). For more criticism of Bergmann/Hoffmann, including their highly problematic distinction of “politics” and “culture/religion” in ancient times see *ibid.*, pp. 157-159.

[6] See a big rally against Israel and the Jews in San Francisco on January 10, 2009, posters at that rally read „Gaza = Auschwitz“.

[7] Wolfgang Benz (ed.) (2008): *Jahrbuch für Anti-Semitismusforschung* 17, Berlin: Metropol Verlag.

[8] Angelika Königseder (2008): *Feindbild Islam*, in: Benz (ed.) 2008, pp.17-44, here p. 32, in German she describes those cartoons as „Hetzwerk“.

[9] Peter Widmann (2008): *Der Feind kommt aus dem Morgenland. Rechtspopulistische „Islamkritiker“ um den Publizisten Hans-Peter Raddatz suchen die Opfergemeinschaft mit den Juden*, in: Benz (ed.) 2008, pp. 45-68, here pp. 67-68.

[10] Yasemin Shooman (2008): *Islamfeindschaft im World Wide Web*, in: Benz (ed.) 2008, pp. 69-96.

[11] [http://www.anis-online.de/1/rooms/\\_index.htm](http://www.anis-online.de/1/rooms/_index.htm)

(04/30/2009). The founder of this homepage, German-Palestinian Anis Hamadeh, spoke in the city of Erlangen in July 2008 (<http://www.anis-online.de/1/pressearchiv/Erlangen18072008.pdf> 04/30/2009), Schiffer was moderator. He trivialized and even denied the unprecedented crimes of the Holocaust. The German reads: "An dieser Stelle greift ein mächtiges Dogma, das besagt, dass nichts in der Geschichte des Universums so schlimm gewesen sei wie der Genozid an den Juden und nichts damit irgendwie vergleichbar sei." In his view the Holocaust is a "dogma", saying "that no other crime can be compared with the Holocaust". The rejection of the unprecedented crimes of the Holocaust is fashionable in the Western academic world, for a Palestinian like Hamadeh it is nothing special of course, he takes this kind of anti-Semitism for granted. Again: why does an outstanding scholar like Prof. Benz invite a person Sabine Schiffer, someone who allows the denial of the Holocaust as an unprecedented crime? The fact that Schiffer is part of Anis' Homepage, is even more scandalous.

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[http://www.medienverantwortung.de/imv/pdf/zukunft\\_28\\_sschiffer.pdf](http://www.medienverantwortung.de/imv/pdf/zukunft_28_sschiffer.pdf) (04/30/2009).

[13] See Sabine Schiffer (2005): Die Darstellung des Islams in der Presse. Sprache, Bilder, Suggestionen. Eine Auswahl von Techniken und Beispielen, Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, pp. 218-220. She plays down the mass murder of 9/11, see *ibid.*, 220, and 14. For her the victim of 9/11 is Islam and not the 3000 killed human beings in the world trade center in New York City, and the other killed persons in the hijacked aircrafts and attacks on that day. In Germany well known Professor and linguist and leftist Siegfried Jäger wrote a foreword to this volume, see *ibid.*, p. 9., using the term "Islamophobia".

[14] Wolfgang Benz (2008a): Vorwort, in: Benz (ed.) 2008, pp. 9-14, here p. 9.

[15] At the conference the ZfA was asked about the origin of

the term „Islamophobia“. The ZfA responded that the term „antisemitism“ in their view is also „controversial“. What a response!

[16] Wolfgang Benz (2002): Anti-Semitismusforschung als Vorurteilsforschung, in: Wolfgang Benz/Angelika Königseder (ed.) (2002): Judenfeindschaft als Paradigma. Studien zur Vorurteilsforschung, Berlin: Metropol Verlag, pp. 15-21, here pp.18-19.

[17] Wolfgang Benz/Werner Bergmann (1997): Einleitung. Antisemitismus – Vorgeschichte des Völkermordes?, in: Wolfgang Benz/Werner Bergmann (ed.) (1997a): Vorurteil und Völkermord. Entwicklungslinien des Antisemitismus, Freiburg/Basel/Wien: Herder, pp.10-31, here p. 11. Benz and Bergmann go so far to claim without proof, that even the success of the NSDAP in the late Weimar Republic was no result of the anti-Semitism of that Nazi party, see *ibid.*, p. 13. Martin Ulmer from the University of Tuebingen most recently finished his PhD in Cultural Studies, proving that antisemitic agitation was very important for the NSDAP at that time. Ulmer can clearly show in his case study that the NSDAP clearly showed their anti-Semitic worldview by proclaiming at every single party event between 1930 and 1933 on their posters „Jews are not welcome“, see Martin Ulmer (2008): *Anti-Semitismus im öffentlichen Diskurs und im Alltag in Stuttgart 1871-1933. Eine Lokal- und Regionalstudie*, Dissertation, Fakultät für Sozial- und Verhaltenswissenschaften der Eberhard-Karls-Universität Tübingen, p. 451. See also the following chapter on „antisemitic codes“ during the campaign for the election of the mayor of Stuttgart in spring 1931.

[18] See Benz/Königseder (ed.) 2002, pp. 273-279, resp. 250-264.

[19] See footnote 2.

[20] Wolfgang Benz (1996): *Feindbild und Vorurteil. Beiträge*

über Ausgrenzung und Verfolgung, München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, p. 19. He explicitly says, that „anti-Semitism“ is the same as „Fremdenfeindlichkeit“ („xenophobia“), and that instead of „the Jews“ other „minorities“ or „people“ („Volksgruppen“) could be set.

[21] Ahasver, Moloch und Mammon. Der »ewige Jude« und die deutsche Spezifik in antisemitischen Bildern seit dem 19. Jahrhundert, in: Andrea Hoffmann u.a. (Hg.) (2006): Die kulturelle Seite des Anti-Semitismus zwischen Aufklärung und Shoah, Tübingen: TVV, pp. 51–79.

[22] Cf. Heni 2007, p. 295.

[23] In the years 1933 and 1934 alone, 61 laws especially against Jews passed in Nazi Germany, see Bruno Blau (1952)/1965: Das Ausnahmerecht für die Juden in Deutschland 1933-1945, third edition, Düsseldorf: Verlag Allgemeine Wochenzeitung der Juden in Deutschland (first edition 1952 in New York City).

[24] For proofs of this take-over of Europe fantasies by Islamist Jihadists see the movie „Obsession“ (released in 2006), with Prof. Robert Wistrich as scholarly advisor. This film was send per mail to a hundred million people in the US alone, see a private discussion with Prof. Wistrich in New Haven, USA, 21 February 2009.

[25] Clemens Heni (2008): „Global Forum for Combating Antisemitism“, Israelisches

Außenministerium, Jerusalem, 24.-25.2. 2008, in: Pardes. Zeitschrift der Vereinigung für Jüdische Studien e.V., pp. 183-187, here p. 186: „Porat betonte, dass der französische Intellektuelle Alain Finkielkraut schon vor über 20 Jahren auf die Verbindung von Antisemitismus, der Linken und Antirassismus eingegangen sei. Heute würde das u.a. im (israelischen) Post-Zionismus ein Echo erfahren. Sehr interessant und für die kommenden Jahre und Jahrzehnte



wegweisend dürfte Porats These sein, es gebe bezüglich des Holocaust einen regelrechten „Opferwettstreit“. Sie macht drei Elemente dabei aus: 1.) Wer ist verantwortlich für den Holocaust? 2.) Wer ist das Opfer? 3.) Sind wirklich Juden die Opfer?“

[26] I criticized that kind of scholarship, including one of the leading scholars in promoting GMF (Group focused Enmity) Prof. Wilhelm Heitmeyer from the University of Bielefeld, for example in my piece about the ZfA in December 1, 2008, see: <http://clemensheni.wordpress.com/2008/12/01/antisemitismus-ist-eine-gefahr-%E2%80%9Eislamophobie%E2%80%9C-ein-phantasma/> (04/30/2009).

[27]

<http://www.lizaswelt.net/2008/12/zentrum-fr-ahnungslose.html> (03/28/2009).

[28] See the monthly newsletter of the ZfA, the January 2009 volume <http://zfa.kgw.tu-berlin.de/newsletter/news-09-01.pdf> (03/28/2009) . Responsible for the newsletter is Prof. Benz, the editor was Dr. Juliane Wetzel.

[29] See Clemens Heni (2009): What is considered extremist in today's Germany?, in Jerusalem Post, February 10, 2009, <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1233304731222&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull> (03/28/2009).

[30] A form of anti-Americanism and also a form of what I call „soft-core“ Holocaust denial, is the comparison of the US after 9/11 with Nazi Germany. This is an essential part of fashionable philosopher Giorgio Agamben. He wrote the same year as Davos happened, 2003, the following lines: „The USA Patriot Act issued by the U.S. Senate on October 26, 2001, already allowed the attorney general to ‘take into custody’ any alien suspected of activities that endangered ‘the national security of the United States,’ but within seven days the alien had to be either released or charged with the

violation of immigration laws or some other criminal offense. What is new about President Bush's order is that it radically erases any legal status of the individual, thus producing a legally unnamable and unclassifiable being. Not only the Taliban captured in Afghanistan not enjoy the status of POW's as defined by the Geneva Convention, they do not even have the status of persons charged with a crime according to American laws. (...) The only thing to which it could possibly be compared is the legal situation of the Jews in the Nazi Lager [camps], who, along with their citizenship, had lost every legal identity, but at least retained their identity as Jews" (Giorgio Agamben (2003/2005): State of Exception, Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 3-4). There are a lot of things to criticize here, including Agamben's view on law, democracy (which he, coming from the "radical left", detests like his godfather from the radical right, Carl Schmitt), which is too much for a short essay. But most important is the following: Such a comparison is anti-Semitic, because it banalizes the Holocaust. Jews were killed by Germans, intentionally. Whether one is in favor or not with former President Bush's policies in regard to war criminals like the Taliban (and they are criminals), America has no plan to eradicate all Taliban. Such an accusation is extremely absurd. The fact, that Agamben nevertheless is taken seriously in the Western world, especially in "intellectual circles" who prefer "the latest thing" of philosophy, is a sign of decay in serious scholarly and intellectual research in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A journalist in 2003 described Agamben splendidly: "Because Agamben must be taken seriously. That at least is the claim he has successfully defended until now. He benefits from the perfume of the radical. The Agambenian critique of democracy could not be more trenchant: today's constitutional states are in essence nothing more than huge concentration camps. This is what he attempts to demonstrate in "Homo Sacer", originally published in 1995, with an eclectic overview of the legal history of the West. The modern state is

nothing other than a totalitarian organisation for the efficient administration of bare biological life" (Daniel Binswanger (2005): Preacher of the profane. Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben is a beacon for an entire generation of young intellectuals across Europe – and a flighty eclectic, in: <http://www.signandsight.com/features/399.html> (01.18.2008), first published in German in Die Weltwoche, October 13, 2005). The "universalization" of National Socialism, the Holocaust, and concentration camps, is part of my criticism of new antisemitism. The father of this concept of "universalization" of German guilt and denial of the specific of the destruction of European Jews is Martin Heidegger, see Clemens Heni (2008): Secondary Anti-Semitism. From Hard-core to soft-core denial of the Shoah, in: Jewish Political Studies Review, 20:3-4 (Fall 2008), pp. 73-92", <http://www.jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DBID=1&LNGID=1&TMID=111&FID=625&PID=0&IID=2675> (04/30/2009).

[31]

[http://www.achgut.com/dadgdx/index.php/dadgd/article/aliens\\_und\\_antisemiten/](http://www.achgut.com/dadgdx/index.php/dadgd/article/aliens_und_antisemiten/) (03/29/2009).

[32] Klaus Faber (2009): Islamophobia is not the same as anti-Semitism, in: Jerusalem Post, March 10, 2009, <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1236676912135&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FPrinter> (04/15/2009).

[33] Benjamin Weinthal (2009): Anti-Semitism research center in Germany criticized for failing to urge boycott of Durban II, in: Jerusalem Post, Mar. 11, 2009, <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1236764158749&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FPrinter> (03/27/2009).

[34] Weinthal 2009.

[35] Cf. footnote 5.

[36] Cf. footnote 17.

[37] Robert Wistrich mentioned at his speech at the Simon Wiesenthal Center in New York City, Manhattan, on February 26, 2009, that he would today be a millionaire if he had asked for a certificate for his term „longest hatred“, title of a film and his book Robert S. Wistrich (1991): Anti-Semitism. The Longest Hatred, London: Methuen. It is not by accident that Wistrich, one of the leading historians of anti-Semitism worldwide, was never invited to talk at the ZfA. The ZfA has obviously no interest in someone who is aware of the threat deriving of Islamic Jihad and who talks loudly and publicly about Muslim anti-Semitism. They prefer the concept of “Islamophobia” and invite ‘scholars’ like Schiffer, who makes propaganda against MEMRI (see footnote 12), an organization who translates Arabic, Farsi and other Islamist documents.

[38] Dr. Charles Small mentioned this „pathetic“ moment, when Wiesel talked at the Yale Law School a few years ago, at a lecture he gave at the conference of the Canadian Academic Friends of Israel (CAFI) in Toronto, March 9, 2009. I myself attended a big rally of some 10.000 people in Manhattan/New York City on September 22, 2008, one day before Iranian President Ahamdinejad gave one of the most anti-Zionist anti-Semitic speeches in the history of the United Nations. Wiesel spoke at this rally and urged the world to act against Iran!

[39] See Interview with Prof. Bergmann in Neue Zürcher Zeitung, February 9, 2009. He claims that Muslim just were in fear of their relatives in Gaza etc. He does not at all explain what the slogan „Death to the Jews“ or „Olmert is a son of a dog“ has to do with worry about family in Gaza. In consequence he says, it is something totally different if German leftist or right-wingers are against Israel, compared to anti-Israel hatred of Muslims! The German original reads: „Question: „Sie verharmlosen den Hass der Demonstranten. Bergmann: „Keineswegs. Aber wenn Palästinenser, die um ihre Angehörigen und Freunde im Gazastreifen fürchten und vielleicht Familienmitglieder im Konflikt mit Israel verloren

haben, ihre Wut und Angst artikulieren, dann ist das erst einmal eine Reaktion auf einen aktuellen Konflikt. Man muss das anders bewerten, als wenn deutsche Rechte oder Linke aus ideologischen Gründen so etwas tun.“