

## The Toulouse Murders



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On March 19, 2012, Mohammed Merah, a Frenchman of Algerian origin, killed a teacher and three children in front of the Toulouse Jewish school Otzar Hatorah. Earlier that month, he murdered three French soldiers. A few days after the Toulouse murders, Merah was killed in a shootout with French police.<sup>1</sup>

Murders in France and elsewhere are frequent, and a significant percentage of murder victims are children. Yet the murder by this fanatic drew worldwide attention,<sup>2</sup> which usually focused far more on the killing of the Jewish victims than that of the soldiers.

For French Jews, this tragedy recalled events of past decades, the more so as the murderer was an Al Qaeda sympathizer. Six people in the Jewish Goldenberg restaurant in Paris were killed in 1982 by terrorists, most probably from the Arab Abu Nidal group.<sup>3</sup>

In the past decade, antisemitic motives were behind murders of Jews committed by Muslims living in France. Sebastien Selam, a Jewish disc jockey, was killed by his Muslim childhood friend and neighbor Adel Amastaibou in 2003. Medical experts found the murderer mentally insane. When the judges accepted this conclusion, such finding prevented a trial in which the antisemitism of substantial parts of the French Muslim commu-

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1. Murray Wardrop, Chris Irvine, Raf Sanchez, and Amy Willis, "Toulouse Siege as It Happened," *Telegraph*, March 22, 2012.

2. Edward Cody, "Mohammed Merah, Face of the New Terrorism," *Washington Post*, March 22, 2012.

3. *New York Times* Service, "Terrorist Abu Nidal Reportedly Found Dead," *Baltimore Sun*, August 20, 2002.

nity might have been discussed. There were those in the Jewish community who saw in the absence of a trial yet another sign of how touchy a subject Muslim antisemitism is in public debate.

Richard Prasquier, president of the French Jewish umbrella organization CRIF (Conseil Représentatif des Institutions Juives de France), said years later that Amastaibou was put in a mental hospital. Until 2007, however, he was permitted to return home. Prasquier remarked that public health specialists thought this would be good for his mental health. They did not consider at all that they were putting his neighbors, the Selam family, in danger.

Axel Metzker, a lawyer for the Selam family, said that Amastaibou had been presented as having a clean charge sheet prior to the murder. Metzker claimed that “Amastaibou had at least 10 prior violent convictions, including assaulting rabbis, threatening pregnant Jewish women and making Molotov cocktails, but the panel of expert doctors had known nothing about them.”<sup>4</sup>

In 2006, a young Jewish man, Ilan Halimi, was kidnapped, tortured for 24 days, and killed. The kidnappers, led by Youssouf Fofana, called themselves the “Gang of Barbarians.” When the court trial began in 2009, Fofana shouted “Allahu Akbar” and gave his identity as “Arabs African revolt barbarian salafist army.”<sup>5</sup>

#### FRENCH POLITICIANS

It is not only French Jews who recall ugly statements made in the past by French politicians. In October 1980, there was a lethal bomb attack on a synagogue on Rue Copernic in Paris. As Avi Pazner, former Israeli ambassador to France, recalls: “Raymond Barre, the [right-wing] French prime minister at the time, displayed hidden antisemitic feelings when he stated that the terrorists had aimed at the Jews, but had killed innocent Frenchmen.”<sup>6</sup>

The French Socialist Party, which since spring 2012 holds the French presidency again, has a particularly loathsome past as far as the fight against antisemitism in this century is concerned. When in late 2000 a flood of antisemitic incidents began, the Jospin government—in particular Daniel

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4. Brett Kline, “Two Sons of France,” *Jerusalem Post*, January 21, 2010.

5. “Trial Begins of French ‘Gang of Barbarians’ Accused of Killing Young Jew after 24-Day Torture,” *Daily Mail*, April 30, 2009.

6. Avi Pazner, interview by Manfred Gerstenfeld, “Choosing Between Israel and the Arabs,” *Israel and Europe, An Expanding Abyss* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, Konrad Adenauer Foundation, 2005), 165.

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Vaillant, minister of the interior—closed their eyes. They feared that “the social peace” in France would be undermined if they told the truth—that most of the attackers were Muslims from immigrant families.

French Jewish philosopher and sociologist Shmuel Trigano gave this summary: “Jewish citizens couldn’t understand that violent acts were being committed against them in the name of developments 3,000 kilometers away, yet they were not entirely surprised by the violence of some Arabs. They considered it outrageous, however, that the French government and society didn’t condemn it immediately.”<sup>7</sup>

In January 2002, when major antisemitic eruptions in France had already been taking place for well over a year, Socialist foreign minister Hubert Védrine implied empathy for the Muslim violence against Jews in France, stating: “One doesn’t necessarily have to be shocked that young Frenchmen of immigrant origins have compassion for the Palestinians and are extremely excited seeing what is happening.”<sup>8</sup>

Official French reactions to the Merah murders were partly influenced by their timing. France was in the middle of a bitter presidential campaign, in which immigration issues played an important role. In attacking ritual slaughter—halal and kosher—the UMP Party of then-president Nicolas Sarkozy went to extremes. Prime minister François Fillon said that Muslims and Jews should give up the traditions of their forefathers of ritual slaughter, which nowadays are rather irrelevant.<sup>9</sup>

After the murders, the two prime candidates for the presidency were taking no risks. Together with Prasquier, Sarkozy visited the school in Toulouse. Both he and his main opponent, Socialist François Hollande, refrained from campaigning for two days.<sup>10</sup>

#### AL QAEDA INCITEMENT

British antisemitism expert Michael Whine has made a detailed analysis of terrorist incidents against Jewish communities and Israeli citizens abroad, over the period 1968-2010. He mentioned that Ayman al-Zawahiri,

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7. Shmuel Trigano, interview by Manfred Gerstenfeld, “French Antisemitism: A Barometer for Gauging Society’s Perverseness,” *Post Holocaust and Antisemitism* 26 (November 1, 2004).

8. Itamar Eichner, “The Anti-Jewish Aggressions Can Be Understood,” *Yediot Aharonot*, January 15, 2005.

9. “François Fillon s’en prend au halal et au casher,” *Le Point*, June 3, 2012.

10. Gregory Viscusi, Mark Deen, and Helene Fouquet, “Toulouse Murders Color French Presidential Campaign,” [www.businessweek.com/news/2012-03-23/toulouse-murders-color-france-s-presidential-election-campaign](http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-03-23/toulouse-murders-color-france-s-presidential-election-campaign).

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the current leader of Al-Qaeda, published several calls to attack not only Israelis, but also Jews in general.

Al-Zawahrari wrote, for instance: "Tracking down the Americans and the Jews is not impossible. Killing them with a single bullet, a stab, or a device made up of a popular mix of explosives or hitting them with an iron rod is not impossible. Burning down their property with Molotov cocktails is not difficult. With the available means, small groups could prove to be a frightening horror for the Americans and the Jews."<sup>11</sup>

The Merah murders were the worst acts of violence against Jewish schools anywhere in the past decades. Over the years, a number of violent attacks on Jewish schools have occurred, many of them in Muslim or Latin American countries. In recent years, several such attacks took place in Montreal. The worst one before the Toulouse murders was in 1995, when a car bomb exploded outside a Jewish school in Lyons, France, wounding 14 people.<sup>12</sup>

#### INCREASED SECURITY MEASURES

The impact of the murders, however, went far beyond France. Jewish communities all over Europe implemented increased security measures. Ervin Kohn, head of the Jewish community in Oslo, told the daily paper *Dagbladet*, "This could just have easily happened in Norway. We do not feel safe." He added that the Jewish community is a vulnerable group and would like to see permanent police protection at its institutions.<sup>13</sup>

Also in the Netherlands, extra security measures for Jewish institutions were put in place. There is a long conflict between the Jewish community and the Dutch government about the latter's unwillingness to contribute toward the community's large expenses for security.<sup>14</sup> In Belgium, England, Italy, and other European countries, Jewish communities

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11. A. Al-Zawahiri, "Knights Under the Prophet's Banner," *FBIS Daily Report*, December 12, 2001. Quoted in Michael Whine, "Terrorist Incidents against Jewish Communities and Israeli Citizens Abroad, 1968-2010," *Post-Holocaust and Antisemitism* 108 (July 1, 2011).

12. Manfred Gerstenfeld, "Antisemitism and Anti-Israelism in Western Schools," *Post-Holocaust and Antisemitism* 112 (November 1, 2011).

13. [www.dagbladet.no/2012/03/20/nyheter/det\\_jodiske\\_samfunnet/barn\\_skutt/det\\_mosaiske\\_trossamfunnet/20756031/](http://www.dagbladet.no/2012/03/20/nyheter/det_jodiske_samfunnet/barn_skutt/det_mosaiske_trossamfunnet/20756031/).

14. Brief van het CJO aan de leden van de Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, June 24, 2010.

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expressed their fears.<sup>15</sup> Even in New York, there were increased security measures taken.<sup>16</sup>

There were many French condemnations of the killings by Merah, and from a number of Muslim sources as well. Condemnations also poured in from a variety of countries as well as from UN secretary Ban Ki-Moon. A delegation on behalf of the king of Morocco extended condolences to the Toulouse school.

Catherine Ashton, the high representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, engendered fury by mentioning Gaza and Toulouse in the same speech, suggesting moral equivalence. Senior ministers Avigdor Lieberman, Ehud Barak, and Eli Yishai condemned her statements, as did opposition leader Tzipi Livni.<sup>17</sup> Thereafter, Ashton's staff explained that she had been misquoted.

Even if this were true, mixing the Toulouse case with other unrelated ones was inappropriate. One cannot understand Israeli anger over her statements without knowing how biased this British Labour politician has been in the past. One instance was her reaction to the Gaza flotilla, where she asked Israel to lift its blockade, which is fully legal.<sup>18</sup> This request implicitly suggests helping the terrorist organization Hamas obtain more weapons.

#### BREIVIK AND MERAH: TWO IDEOLOGICAL MURDERERS

Contemporary European reality can be somewhat better understood when one compares the Merah murders with those by Norwegian Anders Breivik. In July 2011, he killed eight people with a bomb near government buildings in Oslo. Breivik thereafter murdered 69 others, mainly youngsters from the AUF youth movement of the Labor Party at a camp on the island of Utoya.<sup>19</sup>

These two murderers and responses to their acts have important elements in common, yet differ on other major points. Both killers were driven by ideology and chose their targets within specific groups. Breivik aimed

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15. Revital Blumenfeld, "European Jewish Communities Ramp Up Security Following Toulouse Attack," *Haaretz*, March 21, 2012.

16. Associated Press, "Security Up at NY Jewish Sites after France Attack," *ABC News*, March 20, 2012.

17. Barak Ravid, "Lieberman: Ashton's Comparison of Toulouse Attack to Gaza Deaths 'Inappropriate,'" *Haaretz*, March 20, 2012.

18. Manfred Gerstenfeld, "The Gaza Flotilla, Facts and Official Reactions," *Post-Holocaust and Antisemitism* 102 (September 15, 2010).

19. "Anders Breivik Describes Norway Island Massacre," *BBC News Europe*, April 20, 2012.

primarily at the Labor Party, while Merah chose his victims among soldiers and the Jewish community.

After the Breivik murders, Norwegian Labor Party Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg stated that Norway would respond with even more democracy and openness.<sup>20</sup> This was propaganda, as the opposite took place. Norway is a country where opponents of the Labor establishment had great difficulty expressing themselves before the murders. Afterward, it became almost impossible for them.

American author Bruce Bawer describes this in his book, *The New Quislings* (subtitle, *How the International Left Used the Oslo Massacre to Silence Debate about Islam*). Vidkun Quisling, the Norwegian prime minister under the German occupation, became the template for a person who betrays his country and collaborates with foreign totalitarians; his name has even become a generic word in dictionaries. Bawer suggests that there are leftists, to be called “New Quislings,” who betray democracy by helping totalitarian Islam. He also describes how he himself was demonized in Norway after the murders.<sup>21</sup>

#### BREIVIK AND MERAH’S WORLD VIEWS

Breivik was a loner. Intelligence services did not claim that they had information about other such potential murderers. A logical question was thus asked: who incited Breivik to commit atrocities? There are no organized groups calling for the mass murder of socialists. As Breivik had mentioned many names in a lengthy manifesto he had published, a few of those who wrote negatively about Islam were selected to be falsely accused by the media.

Among them were Bat Ye’or, author of the book *Eurabia*; the Norwegian international blogger Fjordman, whose real name, Peder Jensen, was revealed; the leader of the Dutch Freedom Party, Geert Wilders; and Bawer. None of these people had ever promoted violence; Breivik did not move in their circles either. The “New Quislings,” however, needed scapegoats that could be made responsible for Breivik’s vicious crimes.

Whoever wonders where Merah’s worldview originated doesn’t have to search far to find out. He publicly claimed before his death that he supported Al Qaeda, one of the most violent Muslim movements.

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20. [www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/07/27/jens-stoltenberg-norway-prime-minister-oslo-tragedy-democracy-\\_n\\_910636.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/07/27/jens-stoltenberg-norway-prime-minister-oslo-tragedy-democracy-_n_910636.html).

21. Bruce Bawer, *The New Quislings: How the International Left Used the Oslo Massacre to Silence Debate about Islam* (Broadside Books, 2011).

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According to the Pew Research Organization, a leading American research institution, there are at least 100 million Muslims in the world who support Al Qaeda.<sup>22</sup> Even if only a tiny percentage of them were to become murderers, this is still a substantial number. Gilles de Kerchove, the European Union anti-terror coordinator, suggested that there are hundreds of potential lone-wolf murderers like Merah in Europe.<sup>23</sup>

Merah claimed he was motivated to murder the Jewish victims out of solidarity with Palestinian child victims. Palestinian prime minister Salam Fayyad distanced himself from Merah, stating that Palestinian children should not be used to legitimize terrorism.<sup>24</sup>

Fayyad, however, “forgot” to mention far more relevant issues. The Palestinian Authority, of which he is prime minister, names youth camps, sports tournaments, streets, and schools after their own homegrown terrorists, who have killed Israeli civilians, among whom were many children. In its charter, Hamas, the largest Palestinian party, calls for genocide of the Jews. Hamas also trains Palestinian children to become suicide murderers.

#### MUSLIM IDEOLOGIES

One also finds prominent Muslim religious leaders beyond Al Qaeda who support suicide murders; hate-mongering imams call for the murder of Jews in Europe as well. During anti-Israel demonstrations, it is mainly European Muslims who shout “Death to the Jews” and “Hamas, Hamas, Jews to the Gas.” There are many other easily identifiable inciters in the Islamic world who share Merah’s worldview.

With all those who are explicitly calling for murder or supporting it, one doesn’t have to pay much attention to anyone else. Yet there are others who are not Muslims who have contributed directly and indirectly to the infrastructure for Israel-hatred and contemporary antisemitism in the West. One finds many of them in politics, academia, media, trade unions, NGOs, and churches. As they are all “second in line,” they remain outside the focus of those who search for Merah’s inciters.

Whitewashers called Merah “a victim.” Yet the murders he committed should raise far more serious questions about Europe than those committed by Breivik. There are many more Muslim terrorists around like Merah, and his acts have far broader ideological support than those of Breivik.

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22. Juliana Menasce Horowitz, “Declining Support for Bin Laden and Suicide Bombing,” PewResearchCenter Publications, September 10, 2009.

23. “*Ach ik ga naar het paradijs*,” *Trouw*, March 23, 2012.

24. “Extremists Mustn’t Use Palestine to Market Terror,” *Jerusalem Post*, March 21, 2012.

## MERAH AS A VICTIM

Politically correct European elites and many Muslims have jointly created the perception that all Muslims are victims of the West. Consistent flawed reasoning and false arguments have made this possible.

On the basis of fake “victimhood,” platforms created over the years, whitewashers of the murderer Mohamed Merah constructed false images. It is difficult to deny that the three French soldiers, a Jewish teacher, and three children whom he killed are victims. Once having paid tribute to them, however, whitewashers began to turn the brutal murderer into a victim as well.

Among the most intelligent Merah apologists is Tariq Ramadan, a Geneva-born professor of contemporary Islamic studies at Oxford. He first whitewashed Muslim antisemite Merah’s worldview. Ramadan wrote that “Merah was a misguided youngster in whose thought there were no values of Islam or racist and antisemitic ideas.” His next step was to turn Merah into a victim. Again in Ramadan’s words, Merah was “a poor guy, guilty and to be condemned undoubtedly, even if he himself was a victim of a social order which had already condemned him and millions of others to a marginality and a non-recognition of his statute of citizen with equal rights and chances.”<sup>25</sup> Ramadan thus falsely transformed Merah into a non-racist, non-antisemitic victim of society, whose ideas had nothing to do with the beliefs of any contemporary current in Islam.

French philosopher André Glucksmann attacked Ramadan as well as the whitewashing process, which blamed French authorities rather than Merah. This created a fallacy, he said, that “the executioner was a victim and the victims are executioners.” Glucksmann mentioned other Muslim fundamentalist mass murderers who had slaughtered many in Algeria from 1992 to 1997 and were high school graduates.<sup>26</sup>

Paul Sheehan, a columnist for the *Sydney Morning Herald*, was another critic of Ramadan. Sheehan noted that Merah did not kill indiscriminately, but wanted to murder Muslim soldiers in the French army and Jews. Merah had a history of crime and a collection of weapons; he told the police that he had traveled to train as a Jihad fighter in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In addition, Merah followed the Al Qaeda tactic of filming the murders; he mailed the film of the murders to Al Jazeera and dubbed it with verses from

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25. Tariq Ramadan, “*Les enseignements de Toulouse*,” *Communiqué de Presse*, March 22, 2012, [www.tariqramadan.com/LES-ENSEIGNEMENTS-DE-TOULOUSE,11912.html](http://www.tariqramadan.com/LES-ENSEIGNEMENTS-DE-TOULOUSE,11912.html).

26. André Glucksmann, “*Strage di Tolosa, il male esiste. Ora non sia colpevole*,” *Corriere della Sera*, March 26, 2012.

the Koran. The son of his mother's husband is a member of an underground network that recruited fighters for Al Qaeda, who was convicted on terrorism charges in France in 2009. Merah had studied the Koran when he was in a French prison. Sheehan remarked: "The French prison system has become a fertile recruitment ground for radical Islam."<sup>27</sup>

At the time of the major French riots in autumn 2005—almost exclusively perpetrated by Muslims—Ramadan had also tried to explain these by socioeconomic factors.<sup>28</sup> This was just one aspect of the truth. French-Jewish philosopher Alain Finkielkraut disproved that theory by saying: "In France there are other immigrants whose situation is also difficult—Chinese, Vietnamese, Portuguese, yet they are not taking part in the riots."<sup>29</sup>

Another whitewasher of Merah is Sergio Romano, former diplomat and one of Italy's foremost mainstream historians. Fifteen years ago he claimed in a book that the Jews cause renewed antisemitism by emphasizing Holocaust remembrance. This was a new mutation of the old canard that antisemitism is a direct result of Jewish behavior.<sup>30</sup>

While analyzing what caused the murders by Mohamed Merah, Romano took a very different turn. The major Italian blog *Informazione Corretta* quoted him mentioning a mix of factors starting with "the Palestinian question," conflicts in Arab and Islamic societies, as well as Israeli "colonization."<sup>31</sup> According to Romano, the conflicts of the Levant and the Middle East had been dumped onto France—which should be judged by how it had dealt with these problems. He apparently does not believe that the many extreme Muslim hate-mongers should be judged first.

For some, Merah even became a hero. One teacher in Rouen was suspended after asking her class to observe a minute of silence for the murderer. Her trade union then turned her into a victim, saying that she has psychological problems.<sup>32</sup> A Facebook page glorifying Merah was taken down at the request of French authorities. In the meantime, the Jewish school in Toulouse received antisemitic phone calls and hate mail.<sup>33</sup>

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27. Paul Sheehan, "It's Wrong to Make Victim of Child Killer," *Sydney Morning Herald*, March 29, 2012.

28. Tariq Ramadan, "Nos ghettos vus d'Angleterre," *Le Monde*, November 9, 2005.

29. Dror Mishani and Aurelia Smotriez, "What Sort of Frenchmen Are They?," *Haaretz*, November 17, 2005.

30. Sergio Romano, *Lettera a un Amico Ebreo* (Milan: Longanesi, 1997), 139.

31. [www.informazionecorretta.it/main.php?mediaId=2&sez=120&id=43926](http://www.informazionecorretta.it/main.php?mediaId=2&sez=120&id=43926).

32. "French Teacher Seeks 'Minute's Silence for Killer,'" *Agence France-Presse (AFP)*, March 24, 2012.

33. "Toulouse School Receiving Hate Mail Since Attack," Jewish Telegraphic Agency, March 28, 2012.

## MORE ANTISEMITIC ATTACKS

In the aftermath of the Toulouse massacre, antisemitism in France exploded. The Jewish community's protection service, the Service de Protection de la Communauté Juive (SPCJ), documented more than 90 antisemitic incidents during the ten days following the Toulouse murders at the Jewish school. The French Interior Ministry documented 148 antisemitic incidents in March and April, 43 of which were classified as violent. This is well over double the figure for the same months in 2011.

The last violent incident in April happened in Marseille, where a Jewish man and his friend were assaulted by attackers who said they were Palestinians and wanted to exterminate the Jews. The SPCJ published its report after another violent attack on June 2 against three Jews in Ville urbanne in Lyon. It said that these attacks reflect the empathy that some have toward Merah.<sup>34</sup>

In the new century, major increases in antisemitic incidents in Western Europe have usually been linked to developments in the Middle East, such as the second Intifada, the second Lebanon war in 2006, and Israel's Cast Lead operation in Gaza in 2008-2009. This time, there was another development: Merah's murders created a bandwagon effect of attacks on French Jews unrelated to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

In this century, the waves of antisemitic violence differed greatly from three earlier postwar ones. In the second half of the previous century, there were three upsurges of antisemitic violence: the "Swastika Epidemic" (1959-60), one in the late 1970s-early 1980s, and one between 1987-early 1990s. These incidents were studied by antisemitism expert Simon Epstein. He concluded that these waves were governed by some autonomous laws; in other words, they were "bandwagon" types of antisemitism. Someone initiates the incidents and others unconnected to that person cause additional ones.<sup>35</sup>

The aftermath of the Merah killings may thus indicate a frightening perspective. Not only can developments in the Middle East greatly increase antisemitic incidents abroad, but also a major act of antisemitic violence can ignite many other incidents. The perpetrator of such aggression may

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34. "Toulouse Massacre Encouraged More French Antisemitic Attacks, Report Says," Jewish Telegraphic Agency, June 4, 2012. For more details, see *Communiqué*, Service de Protection de la Communauté Juive, June 4, 2012.

35. Simon Epstein, "Cyclical Patterns in Antisemitism: The Dynamics of Anti-Jewish Violence in Western Countries since the 1950s." *Analysis of Current Trends in Anti-Semitism*. Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism, Hebrew University, 1993.

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thus think that the impact of his crime is not only on those whom he aggresses against but also on others he indirectly causes to be attacked.

There is also a much wider lesson about bandwagon effects in Israel-hatred to be drawn. Once a certain narrative has permeated societies, such effects increase. The Merah epigones were probably marginals in French society. In the mainstream, however, bandwagon effects appear in many other areas. For instance: if at dinner parties the dominant dialogue is anti-Israeli, those who want to achieve favor with the host chime in, while those who have pro-Israel opinions may remain silent.

In academia, if leading professors of a university department happen to be anti-Israel, junior staff as well as students do well for their career plans if they adopt their views. The same goes for reporters in anti-Israeli TV stations, or for European newspaper correspondents in Israel. This bandwagon effect in Europe has never been properly investigated, yet it is likely a major force in the huge bias against Israel.

#### ARE ALL MUSLIMS VICTIMS?

One can trace the origins of the “Muslims are victims” fallacy back many years. Dutch journalist Elma Drayer recalls that after September 11, 2001, Moroccan youngsters threw stones at Jews who were coming out of a small Amsterdam synagogue. A police spokesman told her: “I would prefer if you don’t pay much attention to this. These people are already in an unfavorable position.” According to Drayer, “He wasn’t speaking about the Jews at whom the stones were thrown, but about the Muslims who threw the stones. Perpetrators thus became victims and victims became perpetrators.”<sup>36</sup>

Somalian-born Ayaan Hirsi Ali is a former member of the Dutch Socialist party who became a liberal parliamentarian and now lives in the United States. She identified this false, sentimental reasoning years ago: “In Socialist eyes, whoever isn’t white or Western is a victim, and this includes Muslims, Palestinians, and immigrants. My position is that I am not a victim. I am responsible for my acts like anybody else, and so are all people.”<sup>37</sup>

There were also those with a different attitude toward victimhood in Europe. After World War II, there were many real victims, among them Jews who had survived concentration and extermination camps. Unlike Mohammed Merah, they had faced death in gas chambers or from exhaus-

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36. Elma Drayer, interviewed by Manfred Gerstenfeld, *Het Verval, joden in een Stuurloos Nederland* (Amsterdam: Van Praag, 2010), 144.

37. Ayaan Hirsi Ali, interviewed by Manfred Gerstenfeld, *Het Verval*, 119.

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tion. Jews were also discriminated against in European postwar societies to different degrees. Two examples: in Poland after the war, a number of Jewish survivors were murdered in pogroms by Poles.<sup>38</sup> In the Netherlands, government authorities made life miserable for many survivors.<sup>39</sup> These Jews made no calls to murder innocent compatriots. Many of the Jewish Holocaust victims did not want to be referred to as such. They considered themselves “survivors.”

Those who promote the “Muslim are victims” characterization, as well as self-pitying Muslims, can learn a lot about dignity and self-reliance from these Holocaust survivors.

#### NOT ENOUGH JEWISH VICTIMS

The murders by Mohammed Merah have not engendered much serious debate in France about the sources of major Muslim incitement against the West, Israel, and the Jews. Apparently for that to happen, there will have to be many more victims. This seemingly cynical statement expresses the current reality.

What frequently occupied the media, however, were secondary questions such as whether Merah was mentally insane and what led this one person to kill three soldiers—symbols of France—a Jewish teacher, and three children. The aftermath of the murders demonstrates once again Western mainstream resistance to put key issues of the widespread ideological criminality and violence in Muslim societies on its agenda. The main question to be asked here is why the phenomena of incitement and support for faith-based violence in the Islamic world far exceed those in any other major religion. At the same time, one should investigate the other factors that promote murder and violence in Muslim societies.

There is thus a need for a detailed description and analysis of hate-mongering in worldwide Muslim associations, their characteristics, and how they spread their incitement, as well as how potential murderers are recruited or volunteer. Another prime question is how significant is the division between Islamists and more moderate Muslims? While intelligence services know a great deal, far too little of their information reaches the general public. There is a Muslim population of one and a half billion, sections of which threaten the future of the entire world. Without systematic

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38. Bozena Szaynok, “The Kielce Pogrom,” [www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Holocaust/Kielce.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Holocaust/Kielce.html).

39. Isaac Lipschits, *De Kleine sjoa, Joden in naoorlogs Nederland* (Amsterdam: Mets & Schilt, 2001).

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exposure of the perpetrators of incitement, it is impossible to start fighting them effectively.

The study of antisemitism in the Muslim world and its impact on France and the rest of Western societies is of crucial importance. The leading historian of antisemitism, Robert Wistrich, claims that hard-core antisemitism in the Arab and Muslim world is comparable only with that of Nazi Germany.<sup>40</sup> He explains this by saying that widespread Muslim hatred of Israel and Jews is “an eliminatory antisemitism with a genocidal dimension.” The main common elements between Muslim and Nazi antisemitism, according to Wistrich, are fanaticism, the cult of death, the nihilistic wish for destruction, and the mad lust for world hegemony.<sup>41</sup>

## HATE-MONGERING CLERICS

The murders by Merah could not be considered by the French authorities as inconsequential incidents; nor could they tell the truth. Sarkozy said, “The Muslim faith has nothing to do with the insane acts of this man. Before targeting Jewish children, he targeted other Muslims.”<sup>42</sup> That statement was part of the whitewashing of the violent currents in Islam.

France is a country that prides itself on its intellectual debate. A logical reaction by the media to Sarkozy’s remark should have been, “If that is true, why do so many Muslim clerics and others call for murder and why are so many murders planned or executed by Muslims in the name of their faith?” This debate, however, did not take place.

The French government’s operational reactions concerned secondary issues. The authorities forbade the entrance of several Muslim hate-mongering clerics into France for a conference and expelled several other inciters.<sup>43</sup> One of those prohibited entry was Egyptian Yusuf-al-Qaradawi, who has declared that every Jew is an enemy of Muslims.<sup>44</sup> He condones suicide murders and is considered by many as the world’s most influential Sunni theologian.

The Union des Organisations Islamiques de France (UOIF), one of the largest federations of French Muslims, intended to host Qaradawi and other

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40. Robert S. Wistrich, *Muslimischer Antisemitismus: Eine aktuelle Gefahr* (Berlin: Edition Critic, 2011), 109.

41. *Ibid.*, 101.

42. Murray Wardrop et al., “Toulouse Siege as It Happened.”

43. Philippe Desmazes, “Guéant ordonne l’expulsion de cinq islamistes, dont trois imams,” *Le Monde*, April 2, 2012.

44. Leon Symons, “Qaradawi Predicts a Muslim Apocalypse,” *The Jewish Chronicle*, May 30, 2012.

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inciters.<sup>45</sup> The message here is clear: prominent hate-mongers are invited to speak by a leading Muslim organization.

Understanding in which direction France's problems with part of its Muslim immigrants and their descendants will develop is far from clear. There have been no major bombing attacks in the country by radical Muslims, as has been the case in the UK and Spain. The British daily *The Guardian* wrote: "Polls in France over recent years have shown two apparently contradictory trends. Young French second- or third-generation 'Muslims' are increasingly integrated in terms of drinking alcohol or intermarriage, but are also more likely to attend mosque or wear the veil."

Security services, however, worry about Muslim youngsters who commit petty crimes, yet do not exhibit clear outer signs of radicalism; they could be recruited by Salafist organizations. Another concern is French Muslims, who study in extreme religious schools in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.<sup>46</sup>

#### HOW EFFECTIVE IS BARRED ENTRY?

While France may try to bar entry of Muslim inciters, this hardly resonates elsewhere in Europe. Qaradawi was embraced and feted in 2004 in London by Ken Livingstone, then mayor, on behalf of the Labour Party.<sup>47</sup> In February 2012, there was a Dutch parliamentary majority to block the arrival of Imam Haitham al-Haddad, an antisemite. Due to European rules, the minister of justice could not refuse this British passport holder entry into the Netherlands, as he was not considered an immediate and major threat.<sup>48</sup>

In May 2012, the Netherlands let in Anjem Choudary, a British radical Muslim who took part in a conference of extremist Dutch Muslims. Six of his students were condemned to jail earlier this year in the UK. Together with others, they had planned to place a bomb in the London Stock Exchange. They had also prepared other targets in order to execute attacks in London in the same manner as those that killed 174 people in Mumbai, India, in 2008.<sup>49</sup>

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45. Union des Organisations Islamiques de France. See [www.uoif-online.com/v3/spip.php?rubrique1](http://www.uoif-online.com/v3/spip.php?rubrique1).

46. Jason Burke, "Toulouse Shootings May Force Reassessment of French Islamist Threat," *The Guardian*, March 21, 2012.

47. "Mayor Justifies Cleric's Welcome," *BBC News*, November 1, 2005.

48. "Moslimgeleerde mag Nederland in; Tofik Dibi will meedoen aan debat," *Volkscrant*, February 16, 2012.

49. [www.parool.nl/parool/nl/4024/AMSTERDAM-CENTRUM/article/detail/3262660/2012/05/29/Britse-radicaal-Choudary-achter-Sharia4Holland.dhtml](http://www.parool.nl/parool/nl/4024/AMSTERDAM-CENTRUM/article/detail/3262660/2012/05/29/Britse-radicaal-Choudary-achter-Sharia4Holland.dhtml).

That conference also demonstrated that closing borders to Muslim hate-mongers has its limitations as well. Shortly before their conference, members of the Sharia4Holland group held a demonstration in front of the national monument at the Dam Square in Amsterdam. Their spokesman, Abu Qaasim, called Freedom Party leader Geert Wilders “a dog of the Romans” and said that “we will deal with him when an Islamic state in the Netherlands will be established.” He advised Wilders to learn from what happened to Theo van Gogh—a Dutch mediamaker who was murdered in 2004 by the radical Muslim Mohammed Bouyeri.<sup>50</sup>

#### ALL CIVILIZATIONS ARE NOT EQUAL

It has frequently become apparent how difficult it is to state the truth in France’s present societal climate. In February 2012, then-French minister of the interior Claude Guéant remarked that not all civilizations are equal.<sup>51</sup> President Sarkozy supported him by saying that this declaration was common sense.<sup>52</sup> Guéant was heavily attacked by several Socialists and others on the left who prefer to perpetuate the lie that underpins Western multiculturalism—that all cultures are indeed equal.

Already twenty years ago, Dutch liberal politician Frits Bolkestein—who later became a European commissioner—courageously wrote that “judged by the standards of the universal declaration of human rights, the dominant civilization of Europe at present is superior to Islamic civilization. All civilization is based on making judgments. I believe that the civilization of Rome was superior to that of Gaul. I also consider Unionist America superior to the slave-holder Confederacy and democratic post-war Germany superior to Communist East Germany.”<sup>53</sup>

#### THE DANGERS FOR EUROPEAN JEWS

All of the above is highly relevant to European Jews and Israel, in view of the dangers threatening them. Massive exposure of the violent,

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50. Ibid.

51. “Claude Guéant persiste et réaffirme que “toutes les cultures ne se valent pas,” *Le Monde*, February 5, 2012.

52. “Propos sur les civilisations: Sarkozy soutient Guéant,” *L’Express*, February 7, 2012.

53. Frits Bolkestein, interview by Manfred Gerstenfeld, “Israel, the European Commission, Europe, and the Netherlands,” *European-Israeli Relations: Between Confusion and Change?* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs and The Adenauer Foundation, 2006).

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often racist, and frequently genocidal forces in the Islamic world is crucial in order to at least diminish these threats.

Once this is widely known and accepted, one can confront Westerners with the profound decades-long antisemitism promoted by many in the Muslim world. This expresses itself through turning texts from the Koran into actual mantras of hate toward Jews, the frequent import of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* from the Western world into the Islamic one, denial of the Holocaust, promotion of the blood libel and other extreme antisemitic stereotypes, as well as the publication of Nazi-inspired antisemitic cartoons.

One can also expose ample and readily available data revealing that on the average, Muslims in the West are more antisemitic and disproportionately turn to violent verbal and physical extremes than autochthonous Westerners.

The aftermath of the Toulouse murders confirms that the truth will not necessarily be triumphant. Those who manage to dominate public debate, even if their lies are transparent, are likely to become its winners.

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