



Bundesamt für
Verfassungsschutz

Situation Report
on Antisemitism
2020/2021

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A. Introduction

Jews have been living in Germany for 1,700 years. On 11 December 321 AD the Roman Emperor Constantine decided that Jews could be appointed to municipal office. His decree, which was legally binding for the entire Roman Empire, was the result of a request made by the Cologne municipal council. It is considered to be the earliest document providing evidence of Jewish life north of the Alps.¹

In January 2021, at the start of the year celebrating “1,700 years of Jewish life in Germany”, the President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, Dr Josef Schuster, characterised this period as a “*history with ups and downs.*” He called Germany a “*cradle of thriving Jewish culture*” and a place where central Jewish currents originated. However, he also referred to the “*break with civilisation that was the Shoah*”, which “*did not only kill millions of people, but also almost entirely destroyed everyday Jewish culture and practice in Germany*”.² Federal President Dr Frank-Walter Steinmeier made a similar statement, describing the history of Jews in Germany as marked by “*emancipation and periods of flourishing*” but also by “*humiliation, exclusion and the deprivation of rights*”.³

After the end of the National Socialist regime, Jewish life and Jewish culture re-established themselves on German soil. This happened even though Rabbi Leo Baeck (1873-1956), one of the most important representatives of the German Jews, had declared after his liberation from the Theresienstadt concentration camp in 1945: “*The era of Jews in Germany is over, once and for all.*” Baeck deplored: “*Certainly, individual communities will continue to exist here and there, but the nourishing layer of topsoil is gone.*”⁴ In 1955, one year before his death, the Jewish communities had just under 16,000 members. Ten years later, though, there were already about 25,000 – a figure that remained more or less stable until 1985.⁵ After the radical political changes in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Jewish communities grew again. Whereas 29,000 members were registered in 1990, this figure had more than tripled (approximately 93,500) in 2020.⁶ This was due to roughly 220,000 people who immigrated to Germany from the Soviet Union and its successor states as Jewish “*quota refugees*”.⁷

1 MiQua – LVR-Jüdisches Museum im Archäologischen Quartier Köln: The Decree of 321: Cologne, the Emperor and Jewish History, Cologne 2020, pp. 3, 5.

2 Schuster, Josef: 1700 Jahre jüdisches Leben (1,700 years of Jewish life). Speech delivered on 6 January 2021, in: www.zentralratderjuden.de, 6 January 2021.

3 Steinmeier, Frank-Walter: 1700 Jahre jüdisches Leben in Deutschland (1,700 years of Jewish life in Germany). Speech delivered on 21 January 2021, in: www.bundespraesident.de, 21 February 2021.

4 Friedlander, Albert H./Klappert, Bertold (eds.): Leo Baeck Werke. Bd. 5: Nach der Schoa – Warum sind Juden in der Welt? Schriften aus der Nachkriegszeit (Leo Baeck Works. Vol. 5: After the Shoah – Why are Jews in the world? Writings from the post-war era), Gütersloh 2002. pp. 207-208.

5 Scheller, Bertold: Die Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle. Der jüdische Wohlfahrtsverband in Deutschland. Eine Selbstdarstellung (The central welfare organisation. The Jewish welfare association in Germany. A self-presentation), Frankfurt am Main 1987, p. 111.

6 Zentralwohlfahrtsstelle der Juden in Deutschland: Mitgliederstatistik 2020 der jüdischen Gemeinden und Landesverbände in Deutschland (2020 member statistics of the Jewish communities and regional associations in Germany), Berlin 2021, p. 5.

7 Bundesministerium des Innern, für Bau und Heimat (ed.): Migrationsbericht der Bundesregierung 2019 (2019 migration report of the Federal Government), Berlin 2020, p. 97.

Just as Jewish life in Germany has changed and in many ways become more diverse, especially over the last 30 years, the centuries-old and sometimes even millennia-old hatred of Jews has also changed. The fact that antisemitism manifests itself directly in present-day Germany was most recently highlighted by the demonstrations and clashes that occurred against the backdrop of the escalating Middle East conflict in spring 2021. Even before that, the protests against the measures taken by the state to contain the coronavirus pandemic since mid-2020 had shown that antisemitic stereotypes have gained prominence and now have a more widespread impact, not least as core elements of various conspiracy theories.⁸

This report is a continuation of the Situation Report on Antisemitism that was first published by the Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (BfV) in July 2020.⁹ It gives an overview of the forms of antisemitism in the Federal Republic of Germany relevant to domestic intelligence work. Recently, the domestic intelligence services of some of the German federal states have published similar reports with a focus on the respective states.¹⁰ This situation report does not deal with the wide field of latent unspoken anti-Jewish attitudes, nor with what is called “everyday antisemitism”. The latter means that those directly concerned sense groundless suspicion every day, which is conveyed through insulting jokes, disparaging looks, gestures and remarks as well as subtle insinuations, verbalised rejection and also pointed exclusion.

This everyday antisemitism is the focus of science and research, and especially of civil-society initiatives and projects. They inform and raise awareness, record antisemitic incidents, provide help and advice to those concerned, promote action against antisemitism, make available materials for, among others, political education, thus contributing significantly to shedding light on this phenomenon. For instance, the Amadeu Antonio Foundation publishes a civil-society situation report on antisemitism;¹¹ cooperative projects like stopantisemitismus.de bring together actors from education, science and politics on their Internet platforms;¹² and the Departments for Research and Information on Antisemitism (RIAS) document antisemitic incidents.¹³ However, it is not least Jewish institutions like the Central Council of Jews in Germany or the antisemitism commissioners at federal and state level and at the law enforcement authorities who are particularly committed to defending the interests of those affected

8 See: Institute for Strategic Dialogue: The Rise of Antisemitism Online During the Pandemic. A Study of French and German Content, Luxembourg 2021; Recherche- und Informationsstelle Antisemitismus Bayern: „Das muss man auch mal ganz klar benennen dürfen“. Verschwörungsdenken und Antisemitismus im Kontext von Corona (“One must be allowed to clearly name this”. Conspiracy thinking and antisemitism in the context of coronavirus), Munich 2021; Bundesverband der Recherche- und Informationsstellen Antisemitismus: Antisemitismus im Kontext der Covid-19-Pandemie (Antisemitism in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic), Berlin 2020.

9 Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz: Situation Report on Antisemitism, July 2020, Cologne 2020.

10 Senatsverwaltung für Inneres und Sport, Abteilung Verfassungsschutz: Antisemitismus in verfassungsfeindlichen Ideologien und Bestrebungen (Antisemitism as part of anti-constitutional ideologies and activities), Berlin 2020; Niedersächsisches Ministerium für Inneres und Sport, Abteilung Verfassungsschutz: Antisemitismus im Extremismus. Hintergründe, Erscheinungsformen, Präventionsangebote. Informationen zum Thema Antisemitismus in Niedersachsen (Antisemitism in extremism. Reasons, manifestations, preventive measures. Information on the issue of antisemitism in Lower Saxony), Hanover 2021.

11 Amadeu Antonio Stiftung: Zivilgesellschaftliches Lagebild Antisemitismus Deutschland (Civil-society situation report on antisemitism in Germany), Berlin 2021.

12 See: www.stopantisemitismus.de.

13 See: www.report-antisemitism.de.

by antisemitism and who give them a voice. Apart from individual researchers, specialised institutions also deal with the issue of antisemitism. These are, for example, the Centre for Research on Antisemitism at Technische Universität Berlin and the Emil Julius Gumbel Research Department at the Moses Mendelssohn Center for European-Jewish Studies Potsdam or the Institute for Democracy and Civil Society in Jena, which has a broader focus, and the Center for Monitoring, Analysis and Strategy in Berlin.

For many decades already, antisemitism has been one of the topics explored in detail by several academic disciplines as well as by contemporary journalism. Of late, an increasing focus on the issue of antisemitism has been observed; in 2020 the Federal Ministry of Education and Research launched a €12 million research programme, and in 2021 another funding line with an additional €23 million followed.¹⁴ In addition to the historical development of antisemitism,¹⁵ analysis work has centred on current tendencies, taking into account intellectual and cultural history.¹⁶ Particular mention has to be made of studies on specific aspects and forms of antisemitism. For instance, a long-term study has examined the increasing antisemitism on the Internet¹⁷ on a broad empirical basis, and extensive research work and interview projects have described the Israel-related hostility towards Jews¹⁸ as well as antisemitism in football¹⁹ or in Islam.²⁰ Case studies and special research have looked at the different forms of antisemitism, ideological interconnections and the significance of collective feelings like anger, hatred and fear for antisemitism, which is characterised by irrationality.²¹

There has also been a renaissance for works and writings on the connection between antisemitism and conspiracy thinking²² as well as for publications on the consequences for the

- 14 Press release 42/2020 of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research of 7 April 2020; Press release 158/2021 of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research of 4 August 2021.
- 15 Longerich, Peter: *Antisemitismus. Eine deutsche Geschichte. Von der Aufklärung bis heute* (Antisemitism. A German history. From the Enlightenment to the present day), Munich 2021; Schäfer, Peter: *Kurze Geschichte des Antisemitismus* (A short history of antisemitism), Munich 2020.
- 16 Horvilleur, Delphine: *Überlegungen zur Frage des Antisemitismus* (Reflections on the question of antisemitism), Berlin 2020; Neuberger, Julia: *Antisemitismus. Wo er herkommt, was er ist – und was nicht* (Antisemitism. Where it comes from, what it is – and what it is not), Berlin 2020.
- 17 Schwarz-Friesel, Monika: *Judenhass im Internet. Antisemitismus als kulturelle Konstante und kollektives Gefühl* (Hatred of Jews on the Internet. Antisemitism as a cultural constant and a collective feeling), Leipzig 2019.
- 18 Bernstein, Julia: *Israelbezogener Antisemitismus. Erkennen, Handeln, Vorbeugen* (Israel-related antisemitism. Detection, action, prevention), Weinheim 2021.
- 19 Schubert, Florian: *Antisemitismus im Fußball. Tradition und Tabubruch* (Antisemitism in football. Tradition and breach of taboo), Göttingen 2019.
- 20 Ranan, David: *Muslimischer Antisemitismus. Eine Gefahr für den gesellschaftlichen Frieden in Deutschland?* (Muslim antisemitism. A danger to social peace in Germany?), Bonn 2018.
- 21 Glöckner, Olaf/Jikeli, Günther (eds.): *Das neue Unbehagen. Antisemitismus in Deutschland heute* (The new unease. Antisemitism in Germany today), Hildesheim/Zurich/New York 2019; Salzborn, Samuel (ed.): *Antisemitismus seit 9/11. Ereignisse, Debatten, Kontroversen* (Antisemitism since 9/11. Incidents, debates, controversies), Baden-Baden 2019; Grimm, Marc/Kahmann, Bodo (eds.): *Antisemitismus im 21. Jahrhundert. Virulenz einer alten Feindschaft in Zeiten von Islamismus und Terror* (Antisemitism in the 21st century. Virulence of an old enmity in times of Islamist extremism and terror), Berlin/Boston 2018; Jensen, Uffa: *Zornpolitik* (The politics of rage), Berlin 2017.
- 22 Blume, Michael: *Warum der Antisemitismus uns alle bedroht. Wie neue Medien alte Verschwörungsmythen befeuern* (Why antisemitism is a threat to us all. How new media fuel old conspiracy myths), Ostfildern 2019; Imhoff, Roland: *Verschwörungsmentalität und Antisemitismus* (Conspiracy mentality and antisemitism), in: Bogerts, Bernhard/Häfele, Joachim/Schmidt, Benny (eds.): *Verschwörung, Ablehnung, Gewalt. Transdisziplinäre Perspektiven auf gruppenbezogene Aggression und Intoleranz* (Conspiracy, rejection, violence. Transdisciplinary perspectives on group-related aggression and intolerance), Wiesbaden 2020, pp. 69-90.

educational sector.²³ Not least, journalists especially have covered current antisemitism²⁴ and have pointed out the state's shortcomings in fighting violent forms of antisemitism, in particular in the legal field, and have demanded that this should be resolutely addressed.²⁵

The researcher Professor Monika Schwarz-Friesel emphasises that antisemitism is “*by no means primarily a phenomenon among marginal extremist groups*”, but that it is instead “*deeply embedded at the heart of society*”.²⁶ In the opinion of the historian Professor Wolfgang Benz, the cause of antisemitism lies in “*in mainstream society, not in the behaviour or the characteristics of the minority*”. For this reason, as Professor Benz states, antisemitism cannot be isolated from its social context, but instead it constitutes an “*indicator of the state of society*”.²⁷

- 23 Grimm, Marc/Müller, Stefan (eds.): *Bildung gegen Antisemitismus. Spannungsfelder der Aufklärung (Education against antisemitism. Areas of tension when raising awareness)*, Frankfurt a. M. 2021; Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland (ed.): „Du Jude“. *Antisemitismus-Studien und ihre pädagogischen Konsequenzen (“You Jew”. Antisemitism studies and their pedagogical consequences)*, Berlin 2020; Killguss, Hans-Peter/Meier, Marcus/Werner, Sebastian (eds.): *Bildungsarbeit gegen Antisemitismus. Grundlagen, Methoden & Übungen (Educational work against antisemitism. Basics, methods & exercises)*, Frankfurt am Main 2020.
- 24 Gruberová, Eva/Zeller, Helmut: *Diagnose Judenhass. Die Wiederkehr einer deutschen Krankheit (Diagnosis: hatred of Jews. The return of a German illness)*, Munich 2021.
- 25 Steinke, Ronen: *Terror gegen Juden. Wie antisemitische Gewalt erstarkt und der Staat versagt. Eine Anklage (Terror against Jews. How antisemitic violence increases and the state fails. An denunciation)*, Berlin 2020, specifically pp. 131-138.
- 26 Schwarz-Friesel, Monika: *Antisemitismus-Leugnung. Diskursive Strategien der Abwehr und die emotionale Dimension von aktueller Judenfeindschaft (Denial of antisemitism. Discursive strategies of defence and the emotional dimension of current hostility towards Jews)*, in: Schwarz-Friesel, Monika (ed.): *Gebildeter Antisemitismus. Eine Herausforderung für Politik und Zivilgesellschaft (Educated antisemitism. A challenge for politics and civil society)*, Baden-Baden 2015, pp. 293-312, specifically p. 307.
- 27 Benz, Wolfgang: *Was ist Antisemitismus? (What is antisemitism?)*, Bonn 2004, p. 25f.

B. Antisemitism in the present

I. Definition

Neither the scientific nor the political sphere has a generally accepted definition for the complex and multi-layered term of antisemitism. The Federal Government recommends the use of the following definition. It was elaborated in 2005 by members of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR),²⁸ the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), which soon afterwards became the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA),²⁹ as well as by further experts on antisemitism. This non-legally binding working definition was adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)³⁰ in 2016 and is used by numerous EU Member States:³¹

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred towards Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”³²

In its recommendation, the Federal Government has moreover added the following sentence, which goes beyond the version agreed on by the IHRA:

“Manifestations might include the targeting of the State of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity.”³³

How this definition can be applied in practice shows a handbook that was drawn up on behalf of the European Commission in 2021. It presents guiding examples, relates them to real antisemitic incidents and criminal offences and sets out good practices in the application of the definition.³⁴

28 The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) was set up to promote democratic elections, respect for human rights, tolerance and non-discrimination as well as the rule of law.

29 The task of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) was to analyse the extent and development of racism, xenophobia and antisemitism as well as to study good practices in the fight against these phenomena. The goal of the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) is to protect the fundamental rights in the European Union.

30 The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) is an intergovernmental organisation that was founded in 1998 and unites delegates from now 34 member countries, 1 partner country and 8 observer countries to promote Holocaust education, research and remembrance.

31 See Bundesministerium des Innern (ed.): Antisemitismus in Deutschland. Erscheinungsformen, Bedingungen, Präventionsansätze. Bericht des Unabhängigen Expertenkreises Antisemitismus (Antisemitism in Germany. Manifestations, conditions, approaches to prevention. Report by the Independent Expert Group on Antisemitism), Berlin 2017, p. 23.

32 IHRA: Working definition of antisemitism, in: www.holocaustremembrance.com, no date.

33 Auswärtiges Amt: Bundesregierung unterstützt internationale Arbeitsdefinition von Antisemitismus (Federal Government supports international working definition of antisemitism), in: www.auswaertiges-amt.de, 22 September 2017.

34 Federal Association of Departments for Research and Information on Antisemitism: Handbook for the practical use of the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism, Luxembourg 2021.

The IHRA definition has first and foremost been developed for political work, the work of authorities and police work. The Independent Expert Group on Antisemitism,³⁵ which was appointed by the German Bundestag in 2009, has supplemented it by providing a more abstract perspective. In contrast to the IHRA, which regards the characteristic of being religious as the decisive factor, the expert group considers that groups and institutions that see themselves as Jewish but not as religious may also become the target of antisemitism. In the view of the expert group, the term of antisemitism is a

“collective term for all attitudes and behaviours which ascribe to individuals, groups and institutions perceived as Jewish negative characteristics because of this membership.”³⁶

Most recently, the “Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism” (JDA) has shown that the scientific, social and political debate regarding the term of antisemitism continues unabated. It was published on 26 March 2021 by numerous researchers, intellectuals and other experts who focus on the issue of antisemitism. The JDA claims that its definition and the 15 guidelines provided as an explanation are clearer, more coherent and more nuanced than the IHRA working definition. The JDA defines antisemitism as follows:

“Antisemitism is discrimination, prejudice, hostility or violence against Jews as Jews (or Jewish institutions as Jewish).”³⁷

Not the definition as such, but the following guidelines and the practical examples included have subsequently been the subject of controversial discussions because in the opinion of the JDA authors, a number of critical statements in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict should not per se be regarded as antisemitic. In their view, this applies regardless of whether the statements’ content is accurate or acceptable. They assert that the line is not between unreasonable and reasonable speech but between antisemitic and non-antisemitic speech.³⁸

These arguments about terms and definitions notwithstanding, it can be noted that anti-semitism is a hostile position taken towards Jews, who are imagined to be a homogeneous group: *“Jews are not seen as individuals but as members of a constructed collectivity with a linking agenda.”³⁹* Thus, antisemitism may be understood as a collective term for *“all forms of*

35 The Independent Expert Group on Antisemitism published a first report on antisemitism in Germany in 2012 and a second one in 2017. The first group was composed of Aycan Demirel, Olaf Farschid, Elke Gryglewski, Johannes Heil, Peter Longerich, Armin Pfahl-Traughber, Martin Salm, Julius H. Schoeps, Wahied Wahdat-Hagh and Juliane Wetzel. The second group was made up of Werner Bergmann, Marina Chernivsky, Aycan Demirel, Elke Gryglewski, Beate Küpper, Andreas Nachama, Armin Pfahl-Traughber, Patrick Siegele and Juliane Wetzel.

36 Bundesministerium des Innern (ed.): Antisemitismus in Deutschland. Erscheinungsformen, Bedingungen, Präventionsansätze. Bericht des Unabhängigen Expertenkreises Antisemitismus (Antisemitism in Germany. Manifestations, conditions, approaches to prevention. Report by the Independent Expert Group on Antisemitism), Berlin 2012, p. 10.

37 “Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism”, in: jerusalemdeclaration.org, 26 March 2021.

38 See *ibid.*

39 Bundesministerium des Innern (ed.): Antisemitismus in Deutschland. Erscheinungsformen, Bedingungen, Präventionsansätze. Bericht des Unabhängigen Expertenkreises Antisemitismus (Antisemitism in Germany. Manifestations, conditions, approaches to prevention. Report by the Independent Expert Group on Antisemitism), Berlin 2012, p. 10.

*hatred, prejudices and dislike against Jews*⁴⁰ or, in short, as “*hostility towards Jews as Jews.*”⁴¹ Even though antisemitism is directed against Jews, it does not at all exclusively concern people who are really Jewish or consider themselves to be Jewish. Antisemitic insults or attacks directly concern all those whom others regard as Jewish or associate with Jewishness in other ways. Terms such as “*Gesinnungsjuden*” (“*Jews by conviction*”) or “*Charakterjuden*” (“*Jews by character*”), which are used for non-Jewish people, highlight this. People who neither are Jewish nor see themselves as Jewish may also become the target of antisemites.

In many cases, antisemitism is directed against religious or practising Jews, their symbols, their institutions and their representatives; nevertheless, those who regard themselves as Jewish only in ethnical, cultural or political terms, those who are secular, who are converts or who merely feel Jewish in an abstract emotional sense are regularly included as well. Even more people are affected by antisemitism if one considers that “*Jewishness*” is often equated with “*Zionism*” and Israeli citizenship, as it is not at all true that every Israeli is Jewish, that every Jew or Israeli is a Zionist or that every Jew or Zionist is a citizen of the State of Israel.

Neither the presence nor the actual behaviour of people regarded as Jewish is a decisive factor for the emergence or continuance of antisemitism, anti-Jewish opinions, statements and actions.⁴² The characteristics, intentions and actions ascribed to “*the Jews*” have “*nothing or little to do with real Jewish existence or only with misconceptions about it.*”⁴³ Instead, antisemitism is directly linked with “*the world view and needs of those who promote it*”; it “*is the problem of antisemites.*”⁴⁴ Thus, Jews, Jewishness and Israel as a Jewish state mainly constitute welcome “*projection screens*” for antisemites.

40 Botsch, Gideon: Von der Judenfeindschaft zum Antisemitismus. Ein historischer Überblick (From hostility towards Jews to antisemitism. A historical overview), in: Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte 28-30/2014 of 7 July 2014, pp. 10-17, specifically p. 10.

41 Bundesministerium des Innern (ed.): Antisemitismus in Deutschland. Erscheinungsformen, Bedingungen, Präventionsansätze. Bericht des Unabhängigen Expertenkreises Antisemitismus (Antisemitism in Germany. Manifestations, conditions, approaches to prevention. Report by the Independent Expert Group on Antisemitism), Berlin 2012, p. 10.

42 See Bergmann, Werner: Geschichte des Antisemitismus (The history of antisemitism), Munich 2004, p. 7.

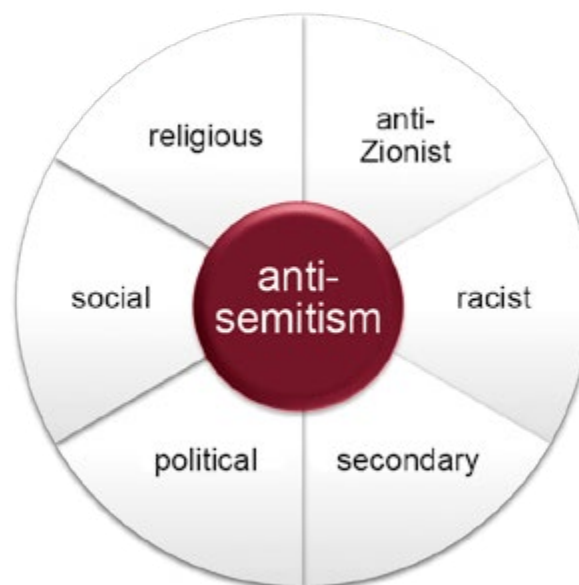
43 See Benz, Wolfgang: Was ist Antisemitismus? (What is antisemitism?), Bonn 2004, p. 234.

44 Wohl von Haselberg, Lea: Jüdische Sichtbarkeit und Diversität (Jewish visibility and diversity), in: Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte 26-27/2020 of 22 June 2020, pp. 8-13, specifically p. 8.

II. Ideologies

Antisemitism is entrenched in Christian European and, not least, German culture. Scientific research mostly doubts that there is an “eternal antisemitism”, i.e. a hostility towards Jews which has essentially remained stable over its two-thousand-year history. What is undisputed, though, is that antisemitic ideas have continuously altered and have constantly been updated over time in view of changing conditions.⁴⁵ New forms of antisemitism have appeared; older forms have faded into the background or have been eclipsed, but not at all superseded. Reservoirs of antisemitic images and motifs, partly handed down through the centuries, have remained available, have been adapted to new circumstances and have been linked with contemporary views. Formally and ideologically, antisemitism thus seems highly adaptable and compatible.

Broadly speaking, six forms of antisemitism can be identified.⁴⁶ Since antisemitic stereotypes and prejudice mostly do not occur in isolation but rather refer to and are interlinked with one another, most antisemitic comments and actions cannot be classified as belonging to only one of the following six forms of antisemitism.



Antisemitism in Europe has its origins in Christian anti-Judaism. This form of **religious antisemitism** is based on Christians presenting their own faith as an absolute and on the related rejection and disparagement of Judaism. This was an integral part of Christian doctrine early

45 See Holz, Klaus: Die Gegenwart des Antisemitismus. Islamistische, demokratische und antizionistische Judenfeindschaft (The present of antisemitism. Islamist extremist, democratic and anti-Zionist hostility towards Jews), Hamburg 2005, p. 11; Rensmann, Lars: Zion als Chiffre. Modernisierter Antisemitismus in aktuellen Diskursen der deutschen politischen Öffentlichkeit (Zion as code. Modernised antisemitism in current discourses of the German political public sphere), in: Schwarz-Friesel, Monika (ed.): Gebildeter Antisemitismus. Eine Herausforderung für Politik und Zivilgesellschaft (Educated antisemitism. A challenge for politics and civil society), Baden-Baden 2015, pp. 93-116, specifically p. 93f.

46 This typologisation follows: Pfahl-Traughber, Armin: Ideologische Erscheinungsformen des Antisemitismus (Ideological manifestations of antisemitism), in: Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte 31/2007 of 30 July 2007, pp. 4-11. Other researchers have proposed similar typologisations.

on: “Jews were regarded as blind and obdurate because they did not want to recognise Jesus as the messiah; there were allegations of murdering Christ and of hostility towards Christians”; later, other allegations were added, such as the blood libel, accusing Jews of abducting and killing Christian boys because they allegedly needed blood for ritual purposes.⁴⁷

In addition, another ideology developed: **social antisemitism**, which is based on economic reasoning for the most part. It can be traced back to social conflicts and manifests itself in the idea that Jews allegedly have a particular status within society. Because Jews were barred from many professions in the Middle Ages and in view of the prohibition of interest for Christians, Jews turned to trade and found a niche in moneylending. Their largely hostile environment soon regarded them as usurers, exploiters, unproductive, deceitful and – in the shape of financiers at royal courts, the “court Jews” – as influential players behind the scenes.⁴⁸

Political antisemitism is closely connected to this. It claims that the Jewish minority, imagined to be powerful, conspires against the majority in order to harm and dominate it. This is illustrated by the image of “the Jews” as alleged masterminds pulling the strings behind the scenes and thus provoking economic crises, revolutions or even wars. The idea of a Jewish conspiracy that ultimately aims for world domination is one of the most potent antisemitic stereotypes. It is represented by the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion” in particular, published at the beginning of the 20th century. Even though this document – a supposed Jewish secret plan – was exposed as a perfidious forgery shortly afterwards, this has not affected the appeal it continues to have to this day.⁴⁹

Racist antisemitism uses biologicistic patterns of argumentation and calls Jews an inferior “mixed race”. Accordingly, Jews can supposedly be identified by their appearance: allegedly, they look weak, walk with a stoop, are hook-nosed, repulsive and sexually threatening. It is also alleged that all “higher” and supposedly homogeneous races are locked in a struggle with this “low” race, a struggle that is regarded as a social Darwinist existential battle that can only end in either victory or destruction. In contrast to the other forms of antisemitism, Jewishness is considered to be unalterable. Allegedly, it cannot be cast off, neither through conversion nor through change of behaviour.

Another ideology is **secondary antisemitism**, which is also called “antisemitism not in spite of, but because of Auschwitz” or “antisemitism resisting remembrance”. Remembering the persecution by the National Socialists and the Holocaust is seen as a vilification of German identity and as a moral humiliation pursued by Jews; as a means of receiving unjustified reparation payments or of legitimising the Israeli policy in the Middle East. An extreme variant

47 Bergmann, Werner: Was heißt Antisemitismus? (What does antisemitism mean?), in: www.bpb.de, 27 November 2006.

48 See Pfahl-Traughber, Armin: Ideologische Erscheinungsformen des Antisemitismus (Ideological manifestations of antisemitism), in: *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 31/2007 of 30 July 2007, pp. 4-11, specifically p. 6f.

49 See Sammons, Jeffrey (ed.): *Die Protokolle der Weisen von Zion. Die Grundlage des modernen Antisemitismus – eine Fälschung. Text und Kommentar* (The Protocols of the Elders of Zion. The basis of modern antisemitism – a forgery. Text and commentary), Göttingen 1998; Ben-Itto, Hadassa: „Die Protokolle der Weisen von Zion“. Anatomie einer Fälschung (“The Protocols of the Elders of Zion“. Anatomy of a forgery), Berlin 1998.

does not just downplay the Holocaust but even denies it completely. The strategy of victim blaming is used to accuse Jews of being behind this “lie of the century”, from which they allegedly benefit at the Germans’ costs.⁵⁰

Finally, there is **anti-Zionist antisemitism**, which is also called “Israel-related antisemitism”. Hostility is directed against the State of Israel, which is delegitimised and – as a Jewish collectivity – vilified as well. This is done, among other things, by denying Israel’s right to exist, by referring to the handed-down antisemitic reservoir of images, symbols and codes, or by placing Israel’s current policy on the same level as the Nazi state’s. As a rule, the term “Zionists” then refers to “Jews”, who are collectively identified with Israel’s actions and held responsible for them.⁵¹

These various manifestations of antisemitism show that antisemitism is an extremely complex phenomenon. Antisemitism can neither exclusively be categorised as xenophobia nor only be subsumed under the category of racism. Antisemitism can appear to be xenophobic, for example when a non-Jewish majority rejects certain traditions of a Jewish minority as “different” and threatening. Antisemitism can also take a racist form, as it did, for instance, during the time of National Socialism. Nevertheless, both antisemitism motivated by xenophobia and antisemitism motivated by racism constitute only parts of this phenomenon. For no other religiously, ethnically or politically defined group have there been, for such a long period of time, comparable ideas that have constantly adapted to changing conditions and that could – as regards their irrationality and paranoia – compare to, for example, the imaginary construct of a “Jewish world conspiracy”.⁵² The rejection of Jews “*is not based on facts, but on traditions and emotions, which are however seen as facts*”. Therefore, antisemitism defies any rational discussion; instead, it is hermetically sealed against any criticism and hence refutation.⁵³

III. Manifestations

The ideological variety of antisemitism means that some of the intentions and convictions it is based on may be diametrically opposed. Antisemitism can be found in all fields of extremism – but by no means only there. Anti-Jewish attitudes are common in German society and can also be found at its centre. The most recent results of long-term studies carried out since 2002 corroborate this. According to the survey referred to as “Mitte-Studie”, 4.3 per cent

50 See Zarusky, Jürgen: Die Leugnung des Völkermords. „Revisionismus“ als ideologische Strategie (The denial of the genocide. “Revisionism” as ideological strategy), in: Benz, Wolfgang (ed.): Auf dem Weg zum Bürgerkrieg? Rechtsextremismus und Gewalt gegen Fremde in Deutschland (On the road to civil war? Right-wing extremism and violence against foreigners in Germany), Frankfurt am Main 2001, pp. 63-86.

51 See Salzborn, Samuel: Israelkritik oder Antisemitismus? Kriterien für eine Unterscheidung (Criticism of Israel or antisemitism? Criteria for differentiation), in: Salzborn, Samuel (ed.): Antisemitismus. Geschichte, Theorie, Empirie (Antisemitism. History, theory, empirical analysis), Baden-Baden 2014, pp. 103-115, specifically p. 109.

52 See Nonn, Christoph: Antisemitismus (Antisemitism), Darmstadt 2008, p. 3; Führer, Susanne: Null Toleranz gegenüber israelbezogener Judenfeindschaft, Interview mit Monika Schwarz-Friesel (Zero tolerance of Israel-related hostility towards Jews, interview with Monika Schwarz-Friesel), in: www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de, 2 July 2019.

53 See Benz, Wolfgang: Was ist Antisemitismus? (What is antisemitism?) Bonn 2004, pp. 10, 236.

of those questioned manifestly agree with the classic antisemitic statement “*Even today, the Jews have too much influence.*” and 15 per cent latently agree with it.⁵⁴ The figures of the survey known as “Leipziger Autoritarismus-Studie” are much higher. According to this survey, 10.2 per cent of those questioned manifestly agree and 24.6 per cent latently agree with the above statement.⁵⁵

A similar picture emerges when it comes to statements that equate Israel with the Nazi regime. According to the data from the “Mitte-Studie”, 18.3 per cent manifestly agree with the statement “*What the State of Israel is doing to the Palestinians today is basically no different from what the Nazis did to the Jews in the Third Reich.*” and 26.7 per cent latently agree with it.⁵⁶ According to the “Leipziger Autoritarismus-Studie”, 30.3 per cent manifestly agree with a similar statement (“*Israel’s policy in Palestine is just as bad as the Nazis’ policy in World War II.*”) and as much as 39.4 per cent latently agree with it.⁵⁷ All these figures have to be regarded as indicators – but not as proof – of underlying antisemitic attitudes.

This highlights that antisemitism nowadays tends to be shown less in an open and undisguised way but in a more or less camouflaged, encrypted and coded form. At the same time, antisemitic ideas handed down through the centuries and the related images and symbols have remained available and accessible, including the allegedly typically Jewish “hooked nose”, the “puppet master” and the “octopus”. Terms such as “well-poisoner” and “blood libel” belong to this arsenal of antisemitic ideas just as attributing to Jews the characteristics of greed for money, thirst for power and slyness. In addition, there have been allegories like the geographical term “east coast” (representing the financial centre of the US allegedly controlled by Jews), people like the entrepreneur George Soros (depicted as the epitome of the destroyer of non-Jewish peoples who is greedy for profit and power) or various expressions and catchwords, including never specifically defined “elites”, “globalists”⁵⁸ or an ominous “New World Order”.

Of course, not every use of such or similar terms, not every approval of such positions and ideological fragments, and not every provocation or context-specific ambiguity open to in-

54 This survey, which was conducted in February 2021, differentiates between “classic” and “Israel-related” antisemitism. Agreement with “classic” antisemitism is 7.5 per cent and agreement with “Israel-related” antisemitism is 13.7 per cent. See Zick, Andreas/Küpper, Beate (eds.): *Die geforderte Mitte. Rechtsextreme und demokratiegefährdende Einstellungen in Deutschland 2020/21* (The challenged centre. Right-wing extremists and attitudes endangering democracy in Germany 2020/21), Bonn 2021, p. 86f.

55 Decker, Oliver/Brähler, Elmar (eds.): *Autoritäre Dynamiken. Neue Radikalität – alte Ressentiments. Leipziger Autoritarismus Studie 2020* (Authoritarian dynamics. News radicalism – old prejudice. The 2020 Leipzig Authoritarianism Study), Gießen 2020, p. 225. The survey was undertaken in May/June 2020.

56 Zick, Andreas/Küpper, Beate (eds.): *Die geforderte Mitte. Rechtsextreme und demokratiegefährdende Einstellungen in Deutschland 2020/21* (The challenged centre. Right-wing extremists and attitudes endangering democracy in Germany 2020/21), Bonn 2021, p. 188f.

57 Decker, Oliver/Brähler, Elmar (eds.): *Autoritäre Dynamiken. Neue Radikalität – alte Ressentiments. Leipziger Autoritarismus Studie 2020* (Authoritarian dynamics. News radicalism – old prejudice. The 2020 Leipzig Authoritarianism Study), Gießen 2020, p. 227.

58 The term “globalists” is an example of the context-specific codes common among antisemites. The use of this image is not limited to right-wing extremism but can also be observed in other fields. Generally, this term may, for instance, describe representatives of a transnational and/or neoliberal and global political, social and/or economic order. At the same time, however, right-wing extremist and antisemitic individuals use the term “globalists” as a synonym for a secret (Jewish) elite acting globally that allegedly controls the destiny of the world. In this case, depending on the context, those who hear or read this term clearly understand it in this sense (“dog whistling”). Whenever the term “globalists” is mentioned in this situation report, the term exclusively refers to the second meaning.

terpretation necessarily means that there is full awareness of their antisemitic dimension or connotation and that antisemitism is intended or even that what lies underneath is a completely antisemitic world view. However, this is not reassuring in any way: it is only a small step from this to accepting and spreading other associated antisemitic prejudices and, ultimately, to such an ideology becoming firmly established – especially as such remarks only rarely occur in isolation. For the most part, they appear in connection with other comments, allusions and symbols that all point in the same direction.

“George Soros” has become an established code whose effect as an antisemitic signal can be compared to the code of the “Rothschild family”. References to this Hungarian-born American Jewish financial investor and donor supporting numerous non-profit NGOs and foundations have, as a rule, only little to do with the real person that is Soros and his real actions; Soros mainly serves as a personified “projection screen”. Thus, it suffices to mention the name “Soros”, with or without context, to conjure up antisemitic images of the “omnipotent Jews”. It is alleged that these “omnipotent Jews” supposedly play nations off against one another economically by means of speculations, that they influence nations politically in line with their own goals, that they undermine the supposed cultural and ethnic integrity of Western societies by promoting and sinisterly controlling migration from the Middle East and Africa to Europe and, by doing so, obtain additional power and financial gain for themselves and their likes.

Even though antisemites generally regard Jews as their enemies, Jews themselves may also have antisemitic views and may, consciously or unconsciously, reproduce and hence confirm the corresponding prejudice and images. Referring to these remarks and using the argument that Jews allegedly cannot be antisemites, non-Jewish antisemites then not infrequently try to justify their own comments and actions as being harmless. As a result of his controversial book *The Holocaust Industry* and his decidedly pro-Palestinian position in the Middle East conflict, the American Jewish political scientist Norman Finkelstein, whose parents survived the Warsaw Ghetto and the Holocaust, is considered to be such a “Jewish crown witness”. Allegedly, he not only attests the instrumentalisation of the Holocaust by benefiting Jews⁵⁹ but also reveals that those in favour of Israel’s Middle East policy deliberately discredit their opponents by accusing them of antisemitism.⁶⁰

Antisemites are just as happy to seize on comments, especially by prominent Jews, which state that certain anti-Jewish and anti-Israel remarks are “not antisemitic”. For instance, years ago, the American Jewish intellectual Noam Chomsky wrote an essay defending the Holocaust denier Robert Faurisson against the accusation of being an antisemite, without any deeper knowledge of the latter’s positions. Faurisson promptly used Chomsky’s text as a sort of

59 Finkelstein, Norman: *Die Holocaust-Industrie. Wie das Leiden der Juden ausgebeutet wird* (The Holocaust Industry. Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering) (German edition), Munich/Zurich 2001.

60 Finkelstein, Norman: *Antisemitismus als politische Waffe. Israel, Amerika und der Missbrauch der Geschichte* (Beyond Chutzpah. On the Misuse of Anti-Semitism and the Abuse of History) (German edition), Munich/Zurich 2006.

“clearance certificate”, employing it as a preface to a work of justification.⁶¹ It can be inferred from such incidents that statements that trivialise, make light of or justify antisemitism and/or express solidarity with antisemites can also reinforce hostility towards Jews.

Occasionally, antisemitic stereotypes can even be found among people who cannot at all be called antisemitic or who are in fact involved in combating antisemitism.⁶² This is especially the case when, in accordance with unreflected philosemitism, the negative collective characteristics that antisemites claim Jews have are replaced by positive ones and when people idealise Jews, attesting that all Jews in general are exceptional and have special skills.⁶³ It can be observed that even those who mean well occasionally speak about “Jews” on the one hand and “Germans” on the other hand – just as if one excluded the other. This shows that Jews, even when they have German citizenship, are often nonetheless first and foremost perceived as “others” or “strangers”, and not as Germans.⁶⁴

61 See Faurisson, Robert: *Mémoire en défense. Contre ceux qui m'accusent de falsifier l'Histoire. La question des chambres à gaz. Précédé d'un avis de Noam Chomsky* (Memoir in defence. Against those who accuse me of falsifying history. The question of the gas chambers. Preceded by an opinion of Noam Chomsky), Paris 1980

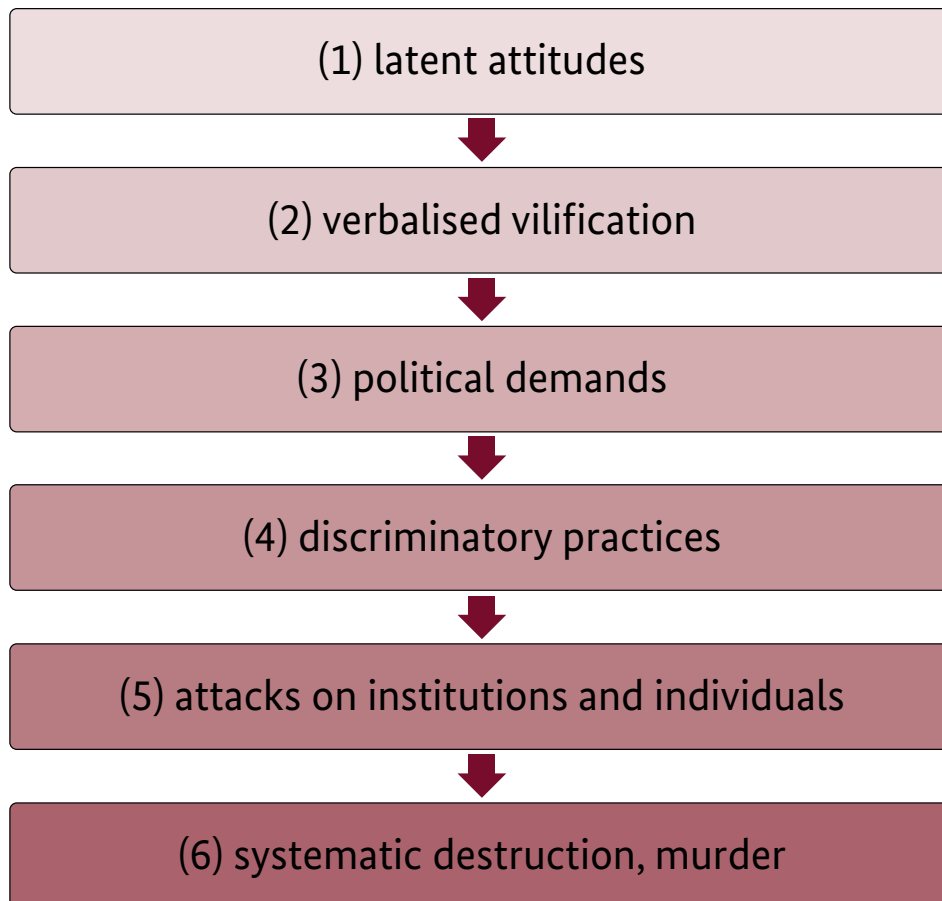
62 Staud, Toralf/Chernivsyk, Marina: *Die Schwelle des Sagbaren verschiebt sich* (The threshold of what can be said is shifting), in: www.bpb.de, 24 November 2017.

63 Diekmann, Irene/Kotowski, Elke-Vera (eds.): *Geliebter Feind – gehasster Freund. Antisemitismus und Philosemitismus in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Beloved enemy – hated friend. Antisemitism and philosemitism in history and the present), Berlin 2009.

64 After the experience of the genocide, the body representing the interests of all Jews living in Germany, which was founded in 1950, deliberately chose the name *Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland* (Central Council of Jews in Germany) in 1950. Its predecessor, founded in 1893 and banned in 1938, however, had been called *Central-Verein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens* (Central association of German citizens of Jewish faith). This association and numerous other smaller organisations had been set up in response to growing antisemitism.

IV. Criminal offences motivated by antisemitism

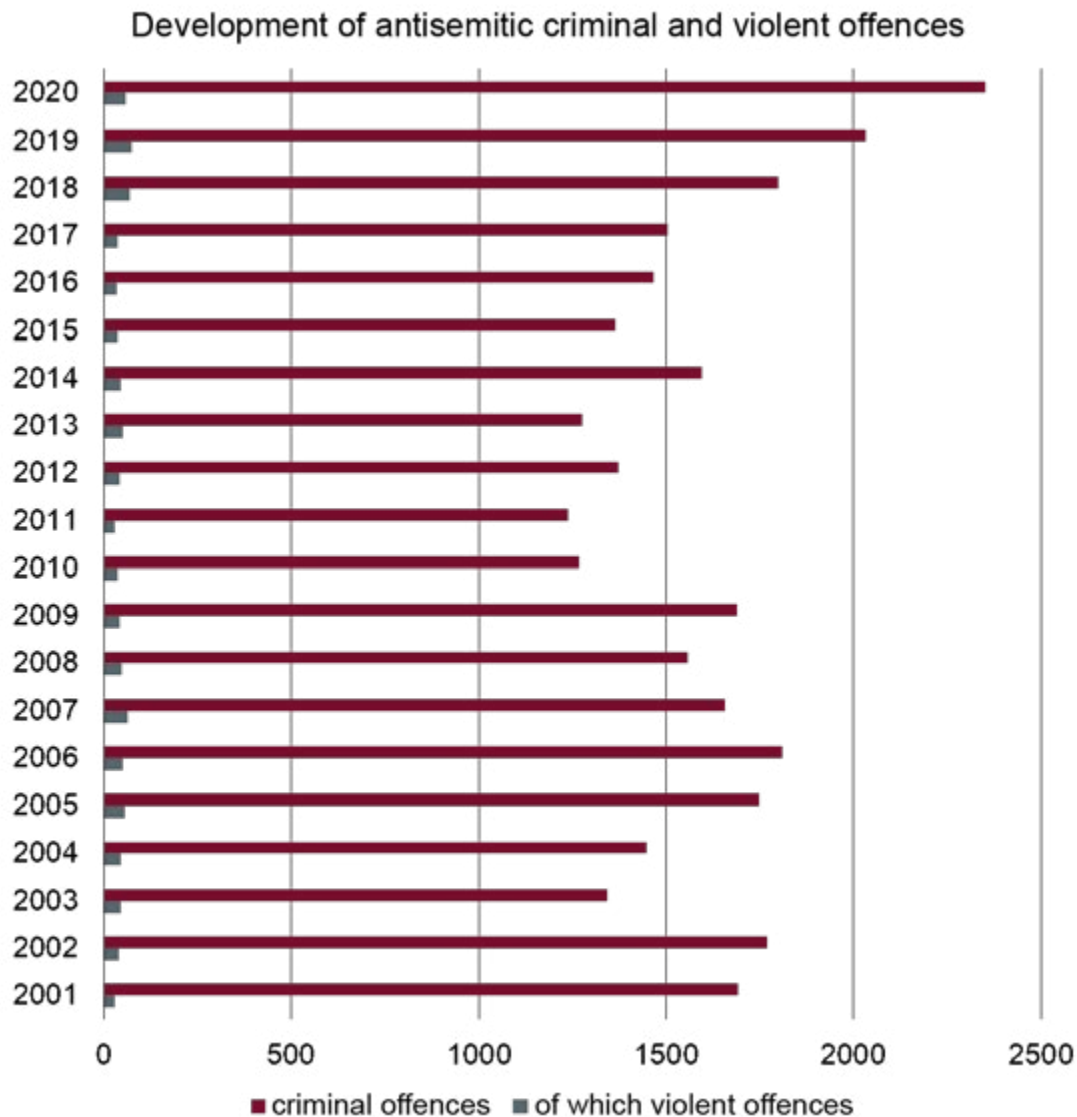
The spectrum of antisemitism ranges from unspoken anti-Jewish attitudes to murder. The lowest stage is latent antisemitism,⁶⁵ followed by openly expressed dislike of Jews and political demands to their disadvantage, the implementation of discriminatory practices, physical attacks and ultimately systematic murder. Broadly speaking, there are six different stages of radicalisation:⁶⁶



65 Latent antisemitism refers to the tacit approval of antisemitic attitudes or a vague aversion to Jews.

66 See Bundesministerium des Innern (ed.): Antisemitismus in Deutschland. Erscheinungsformen, Bedingungen, Präventionsansätze. Bericht des Unabhängigen Expertenkreises Antisemitismus (Antisemitism in Germany. Manifestations, conditions, approaches to prevention. Report by the Independent Expert Group on Antisemitism), Berlin 2012, p. 11.

Verbalised vilification, i.e. the second stage, may already constitute a criminal offence. According to the police statistics on politically motivated crime (PMC) collected by BKA (Federal Criminal Police Office), antisemitic criminal offences have been at a high level for many years and have continually been on the rise since 2015. 2,351 criminal offences were recorded in 2020, which is the highest number since records began in 2001. The average number of offences per day has never been below three to four at any time in the past 20 years:⁶⁷



⁶⁷ See Bundesministerium des Innern, für Bau und Heimat: Übersicht "Hasskriminalität", Entwicklungen der Fallzahlen 2001-2020 (Overview "Hate crime", development of case numbers 2001-2020), in: www.bmi.bund.de, 4 May 2021.

Antisemitic criminal and violent offences		2020	2019	2018	2017
PMC –right-wing–	criminal offences	2,224	1,898	1,603	1,412
	• of which violent offences	50	62	49	29
PMC –left-wing–	criminal offences	10	6	14	1
	• of which violent offences	0	0	3	0
PMC –foreign ideology–	criminal offences	40	57	102	41
	• of which violent offences	4	6	10	5
PMC –religious ideology–	criminal offences	31	24	52	30
	• of which violent offences	1	3	4	1
PMC –not classifiable–	criminal offences	46	47	28	20
	• of which violent offences	2	2	3	2
Total of criminal offences		2,351	2,032	1,799	1,504
• of which violent offences		57	73	69	37

The PMC statistics, however, can only provide a partial image of reality since the police authorities can only record incidents constituting a criminal offence that are reported to them or come to their attention in other ways. Moreover, for every incident which involves several offences, only the offence that carries the highest penalty is counted. Also, multiple mentions are sometimes possible for criminal offences. And the officers responsible must have sufficient background knowledge in order to correctly classify an offence as antisemitic, according to the regulations.⁶⁸

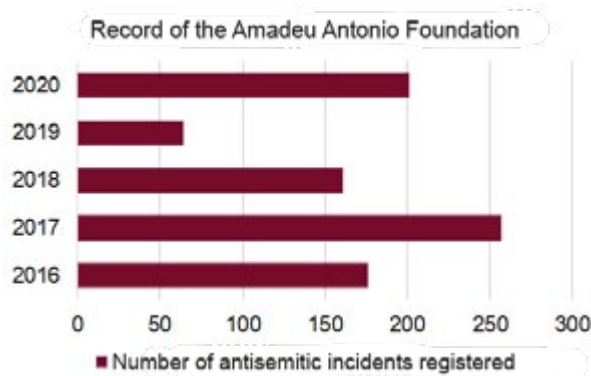
The number of offences cannot be interpreted correctly without keeping in mind the incidents that go unreported, which can be due to all kinds of reasons. The Independent Expert Group on Antisemitism assumes that there is a high number of unknown cases, although, as it says, it is “*impossible to make a reliable estimate of the unreported antisemitic criminal offences*”.⁶⁹ Surveys suggest that the number of unreported cases is many times higher than the number of recorded crimes. For instance, according to a poll conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights in 2012, only 28 per cent of harassment cases motivated by antisemitism were reported to the police or other authorities, while 71 per cent were never

68 Law enforcement authorities in several federal states, e.g. Bavaria, Berlin and Saxony, and municipalities, such as Koblenz and Zweibrücken, have recently developed practical guidelines to promote the detection of antisemitic offences and their prosecution.

69 Bundesministerium des Innern (ed.): Antisemitismus in Deutschland – aktuelle Entwicklungen, Präventionsansätze. Bericht des Unabhängigen Expertenkreises Antisemitismus (Antisemitism in Germany – current developments, approaches to prevention. Report by the Independent Expert Group on Antisemitism), Berlin 2017, pp. 31, 112.

registered.⁷⁰ The survey was repeated in 2018, with even worse results: the share of reported harassment cases (or other incidents) had fallen to 20 per cent, whereas the share of unreported ones had risen to 79 per cent.⁷¹ Another poll carried out on behalf of the Independent Expert Group on Antisemitism in 2016 produced similar numbers: 24 per cent of incidents were reported, 72 per cent were not.⁷² An increase in the PMC statistics' case numbers does not necessarily mean that more antisemitic offences have been committed; it can also be due to a higher willingness to report such incidents to the police, leading to a smaller number of unreported and a higher number of reported cases.

In addition to the PMC statistics, civil-society initiatives and non-governmental organisations also record antisemitic offences. For instance, incidents can be reported on the website www.report-antisemitism.de, no matter whether they constitute a criminal offence or not. The website is run by the Federal Association of Departments for Research and Information on Antisemitism (RIAS).⁷³ Many of the reported incidents are cases of everyday antisemitism, which are not registered by the police authorities – and which are not usually brought to their attention. Furthermore, there are numerous other initiatives at federal level and by the federal states or municipalities where incidents can also be reported, such as the joint project Demokratiezentrum Baden-Württemberg (Baden-Württemberg Democracy Centre)⁷⁴ or the Berliner Register (Berlin Register).⁷⁵ The Amadeu Antonio Foundation has kept a continuous record since 2002. Incidents from the past five years are registered in this database:⁷⁶ 201 cases in 2020, 64 cases in 2019, 161 cases in 2018, 257 cases in 2017 and 176 cases in 2016.



70 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights: Diskriminierung und Hasskriminalität gegenüber Juden in den EU-Mitgliedsstaaten. Erfahrungen und Wahrnehmungen im Zusammenhang mit Antisemitismus (Discrimination and hate crime against Jews in EU Member States: experiences and perceptions of antisemitism), Luxembourg 2013, p. 50. The missing 1 per cent is due to rounding.

71 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights: Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism. Second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU, Luxembourg 2018, p. 56. The missing 1 per cent is due to rounding.

72 Zick, Andreas/Hövermann, Andreas/Jensen, Silke/Bernstein, Julia: Jüdische Perspektiven auf Antisemitismus in Deutschland. Ein Studienbericht für den Expertenrat Antisemitismus (Jewish perspectives on antisemitism in Germany. A study report for the Expert Group on Antisemitism), in: archive.jpr.org.uk, April 2017, p. 30. In 4 per cent of cases no statement was made.

73 The Federal Association of Departments for Research and Information on Antisemitism (RIAS) was founded in 2018. Its aim is to ensure that antisemitic incidents are registered and documented by civil society in a standardised way all over Germany. Registration offices run by different operators in Bavaria, Berlin, Brandenburg, Lower Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Schleswig-Holstein and Thuringia are organised in RIAS.

74 The Demokratiezentrum Baden-Württemberg is an association of several providers offering education, counselling and information at regional level.

75 The Berliner Register is run by a non-profit private limited company and registers various types of discriminatory incidents, including cases motivated by antisemitism and right-wing extremism.

76 Amadeu Antonio Stiftung: Chronik antisemitischer Vorfälle (Record of antisemitic incidents), in: www.amadeu-antonio-stiftung.de, no date.

For 2020 RIAS documented a total of 1,909 antisemitic incidents:⁷⁷ 1 case of extreme violence, 39 cases of assault, 167 cases of purposeful damage to property, 96 cases of threat, 1,449 cases of offensive behaviour and 157 cases of mass mailings.

However, these figures cannot be compared to the PMC statistics or regarded as a complement, nor can they be used to shed light on the number of unreported incidents. The police authorities register antisemitic criminal offences, but RIAS' numbers go beyond that or are even at odds with police statistics; one reason for this is that the categories used are based on different recording criteria. By far not all incidents registered in the PMC statistics are reported to RIAS; its statistics alone can thus not provide a comprehensive picture either.⁷⁸ And in the end, no statistics, no matter how detailed, can show the sense of threat that those affected by antisemitism feel.⁷⁹

When non-governmental bodies run registers of antisemitic incidents in general and, more specifically, of criminal offences, their purpose is usually education, prevention, counselling of victims and especially networking. Some examples of this are the Kompetenzzentrum Prävention und Empowerment (Competence Centre for Prevention and Empowerment), the Kreuzberger Initiative gegen Antisemitismus (Kreuzberg Initiative against Antisemitism) or the Beratungsstelle bei antisemitischer Gewalt und Diskriminierung (Counselling Centre for Antisemitic Violence and Discrimination) OFEK (Hebrew for "horizon").

77 Bundesverband der Recherche- und Informationsstellen Antisemitismus (ed.): *Antisemitische Vorfälle in Deutschland 2020* (Antisemitic incidents in Germany in 2020), Berlin 2021, p. 26. For the previous year, no conclusive numbers are known that could qualify for a comparison.

78 In 2020 the share of criminal offences registered in the PMC statistics that RIAS learned about was only 23.7 per cent in Berlin and 56.7 per cent in Brandenburg; see Bundesverband der Recherche- und Informationsstellen Antisemitismus (ed.): *Antisemitische Vorfälle in Deutschland 2020* (Antisemitic incidents in Germany in 2020), Berlin 2021, p. 7.

79 See Poensgen, Daniel/Kopp, Julia: *Alltagsprägende Dynamiken. Antisemitische Vorfälle in Deutschland* (Dynamics influencing everyday life. Antisemitic incidents in Germany), in: Institut für Demokratie und Zivilgesellschaft (ed.): *Wissen schafft Demokratie. Bd. 8* (Knowledge creates democracy. Vol. 8), Jena 2020, pp. 216-227; Zick, Andreas/Hövermann, Andreas/Jensen, Silke/Bernstein, Julia: *Jüdische Perspektiven auf Antisemitismus in Deutschland. Ein Studienbericht für den Expertenrat Antisemitismus* (Jewish perspectives on antisemitism in Germany. A study report for the Expert Group on Antisemitism), in: archive.jpr.org.uk, April 2017, p. 30.

C. Antisemitism in right-wing extremism

I. General remarks on antisemitism in right-wing extremism

Antisemitism has played a central role in the German-speaking right-wing nationalist spectrum already since the 19th century: The establishment of the nationalist and völkisch political movements was accompanied by a growing importance of antisemitism as well as by a change in the antisemitic justification and argumentation patterns.

Until that time, antisemitism had as a rule been justified by religious and economic and/or social reasons. Hatred towards Jews had mainly resulted from their special economic position, which was largely one of exclusion, or from the rejection and stigmatisation of Judaism (anti-Judaism) rooted in the Christian claim of absoluteness. This change of antisemitism started when anti-Jewish views merged with the ideas of nationalism and racism which had increasingly been spread since the Enlightenment as well with the Social Darwinism of the 19th century. Antisemitism changed to a rejection of Jews mainly based on social, political and ethno-racist reasoning. The increasing politicisation, “scientification” and radicalisation of antisemitism were important steps on the way to the National Socialists’ racial doctrine and finally the Holocaust.

Then as now, antisemitism fulfils different internal and external functions for the right-wing extremist ideology. The major *internal* functions of antisemitism include, in particular, creating a sense of identity and of promoting a sense of community (“function of giving identity”). A clear demarcation from “the Jews” as an external and, above all, common enemy creates a group identity and strengthens it. In addition, antisemitism provides a way of explaining events and processes that cannot be understood or are difficult to understand (“function of providing insight”). Antisemitic conspiracy narratives explain complex facts and developments of unknown origin by blaming “the Jews” and their alleged activities, thus making those circumstances graspable. This provides orientation in a confusing world and creates a sense of security and affirmation at the same time.

The *external* functions include the potential to agitate against the existing political system (“function of giving legitimacy”). This involves denying the legitimacy of the existing – purportedly “Jewish” – order while affirming the position of right-wing extremist individuals and groups as the allegedly only legitimate political representation and mouthpiece of “the people”. Moreover, antisemitism serves to win approval and support (“mobilising function”)

by trying to stimulate latent antisemitic attitudes within the population and to exploit them for one's own purposes.⁸⁰

Therefore, antisemitism is of central importance to right-wing extremism for several reasons and constitutes a linking factor for the scene.

II. Antisemitism in violence-oriented right-wing extremism

Antisemitism continues to be a crucial element of the ideology of the violence-oriented right-wing extremist scene. A variety of forms and patterns of argumentation can be observed. For some groups and single individuals, antisemitism plays a rather secondary role or barely any role at all. If their position is chiefly xenophobic and Islamophobic, Israel as a “Jewish state” can even serve as an ally in the struggle against an alleged “Islamisation” of Europe. Nevertheless, antisemitism can generally be regarded as a linking element in the scene.

An example of this is the violence-oriented neo-Nazi group Sturmbrigade 44 or Wolfsbrigade 44,⁸¹ which was founded in 2016 and operated under varying names. According to the interpretation of the group, the numeric code 44⁸² refers to the SS special unit Division Dirlewanger, named after the war criminal and Waffen SS officer Oskar Dirlewanger.



Sturm-/Wolfsbrigade 44, which had focused on the federal state of Hesse, was banned and dissolved by the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community on 1 December 2020. Among others, political antisemitism was reflected in its statutes, in which it calls



the Federal Republic of Germany a “Jews’ Republic”. The wording is as follows: “We will win and put the Jews’ Federal Republic back on track so that these lands can be called Germany again.”⁸³ The group definitely refers to historical National Socialism and explicitly identifies with Adolf Hitler and his objectives. A “promotional film” of

Sturm-/Wolfsbrigade 44 shows the group’s emblem and a photograph of Hitler and says: “His will is our mission”.⁸⁴

80 See Bundesministerium des Innern (ed.): Antisemitismus in Deutschland. Erscheinungsformen, Bedingungen, Präventionsansätze. Bericht des Unabhängigen Expertenkreises Antisemitismus (Antisemitism in Germany. Manifestations, conditions, approaches to prevention. Report by the Independent Expert Group on Antisemitism), Berlin 2012, p. 20.

81 The group is known by various names. Hereinafter referred to as Sturm-/Wolfsbrigade 44.

82 The numeral 4 refers to the letter “D”, the fourth letter of the alphabet.

83 Bundesministerium des Innern, für Bau und Heimat: Verbotsverfügung “Sturmbrigade/Wolfsbrigade 44” (Banning order “Sturmbrigade/Wolfsbrigade 44”), 27 October 2020, p. 44.

84 Ibid., p. 70.

Apart from open antisemitism, antisemitic conspiracy theories fulfil an important function as a linking element and ideological basis. The members of the Nordkreuz group, who are ready to use violence, firmly believe that the existing political and social system will come to an end in the short to medium term. The arguments they use are based on varying conspiracy theories that develop in the context of the immigration of refugees and also the coronavirus pandemic. The objective of the group is to prepare for “Day X”, among other things by building up stocks and procuring weapons and ammunition. Furthermore, it has become known that the group presumably had plans aimed at kidnapping and murdering refugees, politicians and civil society actors on “Day X” in an act of “violent self-empowerment”. According to the propaganda spread within the group, especially Muslims and actual or presumed leftist individuals committed to civil society and politicians are regarded as the enemy. In addition, the group glorifies National Socialism, makes antisemitic statements, downplays the Holocaust and keeps spreading antisemitic conspiracy theories according to which Jews allegedly are the masterminds behind vicious global elites.



Post of the Nordkreuz group

Such ideas also played an important role in the attack in Hanau (Hesse). On 19 February 2020 the 43-year-old German perpetrator motivated by right-wing extremism first shot nine people dead before taking his mother's life as well as his own. The attacker's world view, which particularly became clear in his message claiming responsibility, is characterised by enemy images, a collectivist-biologistic mindset, racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, conspiracy theories and antisemitism. Underlying antisemitism is the thread running through the attacker's entire message.

Classic antisemitic conspiracy stereotypes are reflected in his idea of an overarching, controlling and omnipotent secret organisation. Although, in his message claiming responsibility, the Hanau perpetrator does not directly address Jews, he considers the State of Israel, as the “embodiment of Jewishness”, to be among those states that have to be destroyed from his point of view.

There are parallels with the attack motivated by antisemitism and right-wing extremism committed in Halle (Saxony-Anhalt) on 9 October 2019. In his “manifesto” spread on the Internet, the perpetrator of that attack also revealed a conspiracy-theoretical world view characterised by antisemitism.

III. Antisemitism among right-wing extremist political parties

Among right-wing extremist political parties, antisemitism continues to play an important role as a linking factor that creates a sense of identity at the same time. Antisemitic convic-

tions and especially enemy images and thought patterns based on antisemitism are firmly established among the members of these parties. For strategic reasons, this deeply rooted antisemitism is conveyed and spread mainly in an encoded form. When it comes to classic topics such as agitation against “mass immigration” or an alleged “Islamisation” of Germany, these parties often use clearly antisemitic reasoning or antisemitic conspiracy-ideological patterns of argumentation. In the years 2020 and 2021, especially the restrictions imposed in the course of the coronavirus pandemic but also the resurging Middle East conflict provided right-wing extremist parties with an opportunity to link their antisemitic ideas with current political topics.

1. **Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD / National-Democratic Party of Germany)**

As a right-wing extremist party in Germany, NPD has an antisemitic tradition reaching back to its origins and still alive in the year 2021. Even though the party’s national chair, Frank Franz, seeks to convey a modern, more moderate image avoiding open hatred of Jews, antisemitic views are reflected in numerous statements made by party officials.



An example of this is how the party deals with historically important events from the time of National Socialism and World War II such as 8 May 1945, the day of the unconditional surrender of the German Wehrmacht. For instance, NPD published a post on Facebook in which it asked:

“8 May 1945: Really a day of liberation? Half of Europe under Stalin’s rule, France and England now vassals of the US or rather of US high finance and the entire continent in ruins. Who should celebrate that?”⁸⁵

By making use of the antisemitic code of “high finance”, the party deliberately refers to stereotypes of social antisemitism. It implies a secret rule of financially strong Jewish circles exerting influence on world politics because of monetary interests. At the same time, the Nazi crimes and the sufferings of the victims of the Nazi regime – not least those of the Jews – are qualified by equating them with the sufferings of the population in post-war Germany.

Terms such as “bomb holocaust” for the Allies’ air raids serve the same purpose: they minimise the suffering of the Jewish population and the nature and dimension of the Nazi crimes. This equation disparages the Jews murdered in the Holocaust and raises the status of the German population suffering from the air raids.

85 Facebook profile “NPD – Die soziale Heimatpartei” (“NPD – The social homeland party”) (8 May 2021).

Furthermore, NPD spreads established conspiracy theories about a Jewish world domination. The March edition of “Stimme Deutschlands” (“Voice of Germany”),⁸⁶ for example, includes allegations according to which the imaginary collectivity of “the Jews” has profited from the Holocaust. According to this publication, they have encouraged a wrongful “cult of guilt” regarding “the Germans” which has “paralysed” the German people until today. Purportedly, a certain viciousness is inherent in Judaism aimed at annihilating the adherents of other religions and strengthening the Jewish influence.

“And a hundred years after Marx’ conversion, these world dominators were still indulging in the euthanasia-related needs of their god, besides the earthbound annihilation of Germans, they let fire and storm sweep over Dresden, Hiroshima and many other cities [...]. However, after this annihilation process of the largest scope, the world dominators created the UN, the World Bank and similar organisations in order to avoid such unpleasant incidents in future.”⁸⁷

The steady influx of refugees into Europe is also a topic that may be taken up by the mainstream society. According to NPD, that influx has been planned by conspiratorial Jewish circles in order to destroy the peoples of Europe and to extend their own influence. The party alleges that the final objective is a “Great Reset”⁸⁸ or a “One World Order” and/or a “New World Order” under Jewish leadership. Accordingly, the April edition of the official party newspaper “Deutsche Stimme” says:



“To employ cheap workers everywhere and to break strong peoples into powerless social atoms, high finance accelerates the settlement of masses of foreign peoples in Europe. Peoples who break into ethnic fragments by mass immigration and who decay to mere populations can no longer develop any collective national force to assert themselves against big business. If solidary “we” societies turn into egoistical “I” societies, the people mutate into pawns of the global financial elite who can easily accomplish their self-centred agenda. Therefore, it is absolutely in the interest of international capitalism to hollow out the national states from the inside and to decompose their peoples.”⁸⁹

86 “Stimme Deutschlands” is a publication by the völkisch-nationalist wing of NPD that is issued at irregular intervals. It must not be confused with the NPD party newspaper “Deutsche Stimme” (“German Voice”), which has been published as a magazine since 2020.

87 “Stimme Deutschlands”, March 2021, p. 7.

88 The term was first used by the chairman of the World Economic Forum (WEF), Klaus Schwab. The WEF initiative “The Great Reset” aimed at promoting a more sustainable and more social capitalism and was presented in Davos in May 2020. Right-wing extremists quickly interpreted the WEF approach as proof of a “New World Order” and turned it into a (world) conspiracy theory of their own. By now, the “Great Reset” has become a right-wing extremist narrative that is widespread in the right-wing extremist scene as a whole.

89 Gansel, Jürgen: Entwarnung für das Großkapital: Die politische Linke stellt nicht mehr länger die Eigentumsfrage. Kumpanei von ‚Woke‘-Kapitalisten und Linksradikalen (All-clear signal for high finance: The political left no longer asks the question of ownership. ‘Woke’ capitalists buddy up with left-wing radicals) in: “Deutsche Stimme”, April 2021, p. 48f., specifically p. 48.

The coronavirus pandemic, too, is exploited to propagate antisemitic prejudices and to use them as an explanation for complex political and social developments. The most common argument is the allegation that, due to their financial power, “the Jews” make use of the media and governments worldwide to accelerate the “Great Reset”.

In addition to the parent party, the youth organisation Junge Nationalisten (JN/Young Nationalists) also expressed its antisemitic views in its position paper “Staatsangehörigkeit = Nationalität?” (“Citizenship = Nationality?”) published in January 2021. According to that paper, Jews are fundamentally incompatible with the peoples of Europe. In that context, Jewish people are even vilified as “enemies of the people”:

“This influence is strengthened by the persistent cult of guilt as well as by the praise of the Jewish communities, which – just like the Arabs – have little to do with the Nordic-Germanic ways of Europe. The result of this is that multibillionaires such as George Soros, without being concerned about it, can invest large sums in anti-ethnic projects which jeopardise the preservation of all peoples in this world. AfD, which almost comes close to CDU by now, stands side by side with the enemies of the peoples.”⁹⁰



Current political topics such as the Middle East conflict are also used for the purpose of stirring up hatred towards Jews. In its position paper “Israel mordet und die Welt schaut zu” (“Israel murders and the world looks on”), JN describes Israel as a “parasitic state” that cannot survive without the assistance of countries like the US or the Federal Republic of Germany. At the same time, that paper states, Israel is working towards the destruction of the German state:

“In the past, Zionist networks have promoted mass immigration into Germany and have tried to stop national criticism of the colonisation.”⁹¹

The narrative of a criminal state structure which has committed an unimaginable number of inhuman crimes and has for years and without mercy been killing Palestinian civilians, including women and especially children, is repeated over and over again. Accordingly, the NPD branch in Rhineland-Palatinate comments: “*The Jewish terror does not end as long as we do not put an end to it.*”⁹² The Federal Republic of Germany is criticised for not recognising this enemy and for having become blind to the “Zionist” threat due to the “cult of guilt” imposed on it and an increasing “over-foreignisation”.

In addition, the Middle East conflict is often linked with German migration policy and thus given xenophobic and Islamophobic interpretations. It is alleged that the immigration of

90 Junge Nationalisten: “Staatsangehörigkeit = Nationalität?” (“Citizenship = Nationality?”), 26 January 2021, p. 4.

91 Junge Nationalisten: “Israel mordet und die Welt schaut zu” (“Israel murders and the world looks on”), 14 May 2021, p. 4.

92 Facebook profile “NPD-Landesverband Rheinland-Pfalz” (20 November 2020).

Muslims is to be considered the actual cause of antisemitism in Germany, as illustrated by a post on the website of the NPD branch in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania of 17 May 2021:

“How can we lie about the fact that Arab Muslims are currently behind the attacks against synagogues and the burning of Israeli flags? By exploiting the circumstance that many immigrants got the citizenship of the Federal Republic “without making any effort whatsoever”.”⁹³

It is hardly surprising that the party does not see an antisemitism problem in German society. To justify its point of view, NPD falls back on well-known patterns of argumentation. In May 2021 for instance, the national chair of the party, Frank Franz, tweeted as follows:

“As long as Germans are a second-class people in their own country, I do not see any reason to discuss #antisemitism.”⁹⁴

Such statements are complemented by the use of terms that are historically charged such as “entartet” (“degenerate”) or “bis zur Vergasung” (literally: “up to gassing”/figuratively: “ad nauseam”).⁹⁵ As a rule, the concrete enemy is named in a rather subtle way by using antisemitic codes such as “high finance” “east coast” or “world dominators” in order to vilify “the Jews” and the Jewish community.

2. DIE RECHTE (The Right)

With its behaviour, statements and activities, the party DIE RECHTE propagates a cohesive right-wing extremist ideology, accompanied by revisionist and antisemitic positions.



Continuing support of convicted Holocaust deniers is not the only thing indicative of this tendency. DIE RECHTE also propagates antisemitic ideas in contexts relating to present times. The party especially used the Middle East conflict that re-escalated in spring 2021 as an opportunity to spread antisemitic ideas. At a rally of the party’s Braunschweig/Hildesheim branch that took place in Braunschweig (Lower Saxony) on 21 May 2021, party activists vilified Israel as a “terror state” and shouted the slogan “Never again Israel”.



In his speech during the rally, the chairman of that local branch of the party DIE RECHTE openly voiced his antisemitic and anti-Israel attitude and called Israel “Israel, the state of criminals; Israel, the state of genocide perpetrators; Israel, the state of child murderers”. According to him, Israel is “a criminal structure which will one day hopefully disappear from the maps of this world”. His speech was interrupted by individuals present at the rally who shouted: “Victory,

93 Facebook profile “NPD-Landesverband Mecklenburg-Vorpommern” (17 May 2021).

94 Twitter profile “Frank Franz” (13 May 2021).

95 Ibid. (6 May 2021).

never again Israel!” The statements culminated in the call: “*Israel is not our friend, Israel is our enemy! Germans, don’t buy anything from Israel!*” The speech was repeatedly interrupted by the applause of the party activists who were present.

In this case, alleged criticism of Israel serves as a front for antisemitic prejudice, by declaring that the existence of the State of Israel is a fundamental evil and a threat to peace. This demonisation of Israel promotes common antisemitic world views, and the slogan “*Don’t buy anything from Israel*” clearly refers to the National Socialists’ slogan “*Germans, don’t buy anything from Jews*”.

A number of further incidents are evidence of the extent to which antisemitic ideas exist in the party and among its members. For example, after a “heroes’ commemoration” in Braunschweig on 15 November 2020, the deputy chairman of the party’s Braunschweig/Hildesheim branch reportedly insulted journalists as “Jews’ press” and “Jewish pack” and threatened them with “*Fire and fuel for you!*” The subsequent proceedings on suspicion of incitement of masses following that incident were initially suspended by the Braunschweig Public Prosecutor’s Office. In May 2021, though, the Braunschweig Public Prosecutor General resumed the investigations to examine whether there might possibly be sufficient evidence for a charge.⁹⁶ Now, however, the case has definitely been dropped.

Of all right-wing extremist parties, DIE RECHTE propagates its antisemitism in the most overt manner; this has already been proven in the past by election posters saying “*Israel is our misfortune*” or by



slogans such as “*Those who love Germany are antisemites!*” But DIE RECHTE also makes use of associations and allusions, as illustrated by the example of a joint rally tour with NPD in the Ruhr region on May Day 2021. During that tour, party activists showed a banner that read “*Whether in Dortmund, Erfurt or Buxtehude: The enemy is & remains capitalism!*” Even if the party is likely to deny any antisemitic intention, whoever reads the slogan carefully realises that the term “*Kapitalismus*” (capitalism) does not rhyme with “*Buxtehude*” at all, whereas the term “*Jude*” (Jew) does. This means that the classic antisemitic link between “*Jews*” and “*capitalism*” is not only referred to but even reinforced and used as a synonym. By using this form of communication, the responsible individuals deliberately attempt to avoid political criticism and also consequences under criminal law. In the form of “dog whistling”, their “*criticism of capitalism*” together with the implied rhyme creates the desired associations in the circles linked with the party and conjures up the idea of “*the Jew*” as the ruler over the financial capital and thus as the scapegoat for economic processes perceived as negative.

Hence, the party DIE RECHTE continues its antisemitic agitation, already proven in many cases in the past. The party conveys antisemitic ideas, sometimes in a remarkably open and

⁹⁶ See Janzen, David: Generalstaatsanwaltschaft ordnet weitere Ermittlungen wegen antisemitischen Äußerungen an (Public Prosecutor General’s Office orders further investigations due to antisemitic statements), in: dokurechts.de, 11 May 2021.

sometimes in a coded way, thus underlining the importance of antisemitism for its self-concept.

3. Der III. Weg (The Third Way)

Although the party Der III. Weg makes efforts to conceal its antisemitic orientation, a number of antisemitic statements can be found on its website.



There are examples of anti-Zionist and/or secondary antisemitism. For instance, Der III. Weg vilifies Israel as a “terror state” on a regular basis, and in various articles it describes the country using the derogatory term “Zionist entity”.⁹⁷ Furthermore, in other articles, it calls for the boycott of products from Israel.⁹⁸ In that context, the party sometimes also refers to the antisemitic “Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions” movement (BDS; classified as a suspected threat by BfV), which also calls for the boycott of Israeli products. In addition, Der III. Weg gives advice on how to identify and systematically avoid Israeli products.⁹⁹

Der III. Weg, too, uses the continuing coronavirus pandemic as a vehicle to spread antisemitic views. Right from its start, the party has repeatedly referred to that pandemic using the slogan “*The system is more dangerous than coronavirus*”. An article on the party’s website explicitly deals with Israel’s vaccination strategy. According to that article, the “system’s press” praises the swift vaccination of the Israeli population, which has led to a decline in the number of severe cases of COVID-19. Der III. Weg declares that it is not surprising that Israel has become the “country of turbo-charged vaccinations” because the Pfizer pharmaceutical group is led by a Jew and the Moderna group has a Jewish chief medical officer.¹⁰⁰ The party thus suggests that Israel has only achieved the swift vaccination of its population because those responsible for the key units in the Pfizer and Moderna pharmaceutical groups are Jews who prefer to provide their likes with vaccine.

Der III. Weg uses this argument to spread a well-known antisemitic topos suggesting that influential positions in society are always occupied by Jews and that these Jews assist one another at any time, also on a global level. The party ultimately supports



97 Website “Der III. Weg” (14 February 2021).

98 See *ibid.* (15 May 2021).

99 See *ibid.* (15 February 2020).

100 *Ibid.* (25 February 2021).

antisemitic conspiracy theories which claim that the Jews strive for world domination. Consequently, these statements reveal a pronounced social and political antisemitism.

In another article, *Der III. Weg* criticises construction and/or reconstruction projects of synagogues in Munich. The party describes the newly planned synagogue as an “extravagant and ostentatious building” and alleges that the city of Munich complies with any financial wish of the Jewish community. According to *Der III. Weg*, the “German tax payers”, who have to bear the costs, will be the ones who lose out.¹⁰¹ The party thereby uses the antisemitic stereotype of the “greedy Jew”, and at the same time it implies that Jewish circles exert significant influence on political decision-makers.

The costs for the protection of Jewish institutions are referred to in a similar manner. The party criticises the Jewish community of Munich for causing expenses for police protection measures, but it omits to mention that these measures are the result of the increasing antisemitic attacks in the past few years and of the general threat posed to Jewish institutions.¹⁰² *Der III. Weg* thus blames Jews for the costs for their protection instead of regarding it as a task to be undertaken by the state for the purpose of public security. The victims of antisemitic acts of violence and/or threatened individuals are thus denigrated as an unacceptable cost driver.

Furthermore, the party criticises the hiring of a rabbi by the police in Baden-Württemberg. *Der III. Weg* alleges that “*making Jewish life an integral part of the democratic everyday culture at any cost*”¹⁰³ is among the fundamental principles of the Federal Republic of Germany. According to the party, the hiring of the rabbi is a “*symptom of over-foreignisation*”.¹⁰⁴ This statement portrays the Jewish faith as “foreign” and thus fabricates a contradiction between Judaism and Germany. From the party’s point of view, people of Jewish faith can obviously be no Germans.

The party *Der III. Weg* uses antisemitic patterns of argumentation in different contexts. It attempts to hide anti-Zionist antisemitism under the guise of legitimate criticism of Israel and to justify political or social antisemitism by criticising the German state or by referring to the protection of an alleged “German” culture. Antisemitism can hence be regarded as an integral part of the party’s propaganda.

IV. Antisemitism in the New Right

The New Right is a highly heterogeneous and mostly informal network of organisations, groups and independent individuals. It comprises a broad variety of ideologies, from right-wing conservative to right-wing extremist, some of which include antidemocratic convictions. The New Right is thus not a uniform movement in terms of habits, ideologies and strat-

101 See *ibid.* (24 August 2020).

102 See *ibid.*

103 *Ibid.* (25 January 2021).

104 *Ibid.*

egies. As a general rule, overt antisemitism is not among its fundamental ideological features. Individual actors, however, show signs of an antisemitism that is mainly based on conspiracy theories.

This is especially true of the “Great Reset”¹⁰⁵ conspiracy theory in connection with the coronavirus pandemic, which has been propagated by the Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland (IBD/Identitarian Movement Germany). According to this theory, the pandemic has been planned and staged by “the elites” in order to implement a reorganisation of the world, which includes the destruction of national peoples and governments and their replacement with a totalitarian system in the form of a “New World Order”. This is a central narrative of IBD. Its activists have repeatedly appeared in public with a banner saying “GREAT REPLACEMENT, GREAT RESET – STOP THE GLOBALIST CRAP”.¹⁰⁶



The “Great Reset” theory is also regularly featured in “COMPACT-Magazin”. This magazine routinely makes use of terms such as “globalist, technocratic elite” or “high finance”, declaring that personalities like the chairman of the World Economic Forum (WEF) Klaus Schwab or the billionaire Bill Gates are direct representatives of these elites and are thus to be regarded as enemies. Moreover, antisemitic symbols and illustrations are deliberately used, e.g. in the special issue “COMPACT Aktuell Nr. 4 – Corona Diktatur” (“COMPACT special no. 4 – corona dictatorship”), which employs the octopus as a classic communicative code for a supposed “Jewish world conspiracy” and as a metaphor for an “all-crushing power”.



More antisemitic positions are apparent in the agitation against the Hungarian-born US entrepreneur and financial investor George Soros. He spends a large amount of money to promote the concept of an “open” society, which includes the removal of barriers to migration. For “COMPACT-Magazin” and similar publications, this makes him the stereotypical enemy, the epitome of the “globalist elites” and a representative of the much-hated American financial capitalism. “COMPACT” does not explicitly emphasise his Jewish family background, but

105 See footnote 88.

106 Telegram channel “Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland” (6 February 2021).

the magazine is mainly read by “well-informed” readers who can be expected to know about it. In keeping with classic antisemitic ideas, Soros is represented as the initiator of the Black Lives Matter movement, which is described as violent, or as a supposed mastermind who is secretly pulling the strings regarding migration to Europe, for instance, and functions as a leading propagator of the “Great Replacement”.



A similar picture of Soros is also painted by the computer game “Heimat Defender: Rebellion”¹⁰⁷ (“Homeland Defender: Rebellion”), which is officially supported and promoted by the association Ein Prozent (One Per Cent; classified as a suspected threat by BfV). The game is about a dystopian world in 2084 which is ruled by the financial and technological capital, called the Globohomo Corporation. Led by “Commander Kurtz”, who resembles George Soros, the inhabitants of Europe are enslaved and controlled as “NPCs”¹⁰⁸ without a will of their own. The name “Commander Kurtz” can be understood as an allusion to “Colonel Kurtz” from Joseph Conrad’s novel *Heart of Darkness* and by extension to the character played by Marlon Brando in the movie adaptation *Apocalypse Now!* Both the novel and the movie character portray a megalomaniac who has established a totalitarian regime and even seems obsessed with genocidal thoughts. The images that are promoted here have negative connotations and are consistent with social and political antisemitism.

Moreover, the association Ein Prozent provided significant support to the comic-book project “Hydra Comics”, which subtly reproduces antisemitic narratives of power and political influence and also refers to Soros himself.¹⁰⁹

Furthermore, contributions in New Right magazines with links to the broader issue of “coming to terms with the past” can be regarded as following an ideology of secondary antisemitism. One example of this is an article by Martin Sellner, a leading light of Identitäre Bewegung in Austria and the German-speaking countries. It was posted on the website of “Sezession” in May 2021; “Sezession” is a magazine published by the Institut für Staatspolitik (IfS/Institute for State Policy; classified as a suspected threat by BfV). In his article, Sellner repeatedly refers to the narratives of “guilt pride”, “guilt culture” and “metaphysics of guilt”, which are widely used in the New Right scene.¹¹⁰

107 On 7 December 2020 BzKJ (Bundeszentrale für Kinder- und Jugendmedienschutz / Federal Centre for the Media Protection of Children and Adolescents, then called Bundesprüfstelle für jugendgefährdende Medien / Federal Review Board for Media Harmful to Minors) decided to put the computer game “Heimat Defender: Rebellion” on the list of media harmful to minors. The main reason given was the game’s brutalising effect and its discrimination of members of the LGBTQIAPK community (LGBTQIAPK – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, Polygamous/Polyamorous, Kink). According to BzKJ, the game on the whole violates free democratic values like tolerance, respect of others, anti-racism and gender equality.

108 “Non-player characters” is the term for figures in a video game who are not controlled by the players themselves.

109 “Hydra Comics #1 – Politisch unkorrekte Bildgeschichten” (“Hydra Comics #1 – Politically incorrect comic strips”), Dresden 2020.

110 See *ibid.*

Anti-Zionist antisemitism can also be detected in debates among New Right members on the policies of the State of Israel. Apart from a neutral position on this issue, there are basically two camps in the New Right spectrum: One camp stands up for Israel's right to exist and Israeli foreign and security policy. It also places itself in a Christian-Jewish tradition which has to be defended against (political) Islam, among others.¹¹¹ The other camp is decidedly critical of Israel, sees itself more in an anti-imperialist – and thus, for example, pro-Palestinian – tradition of thought and considers liberalism rather than Islamist extremism its main ideological enemy.¹¹²

In early summer 2021 an episode of the podcast “Am Rande der Gesellschaft” (“At the margins of society”), which is produced by IfS, treated the issue of Israel's right to defend itself against terrorist attacks and also addressed the demonstrations against Israeli policy held in Germany, which can have an antisemitic character.¹¹³ The speakers claimed that “Israeli lobby groups” existed and raised the question of why these alleged groups always agitated against a political right whose efforts are directed at the limitation of mass immigration:

“I think this question is interesting: Who defends what interests? Götz just mentioned the example of the Jews, who do lobbying here and who are suddenly faced with the problem of an open society – oh my – suddenly there are so many of those who don't like us. Well. Now you could say, OK, they made mistakes in weighing up their choices. They said, alright, somehow we are going to bring this society into line and bring in the people we need, and forgot to consider that they're different. Or maybe we thought, they'll go crazy from all this wealth right away and forget everything. Or maybe it is something like that destructive moment that has already been described in old essays, about the Jewish self-hate which needs, I don't know, a kind of new challenge or whatever.”¹¹⁴

Overall, the podcast paints the picture of an influential Jewish minority whose actions seem to be based on a political agenda. This is a clear example of generalising explanations and stereotypes.

It follows that in the New Right, antisemitism takes the form of political antisemitism and/or anti-Zionism. It cannot be found everywhere in the New Right spectrum, which is probably partly due to the fact that antisemitism is often superseded and eclipsed by hostility towards Islam and Muslims. Moreover, the New Right is marked by a high level of dynamism, both

111 For example, this is the position of the web portal “Politically Incorrect” and parts of the PEGIDA movement.

112 The second position is adopted, for instance, by individual actors associated with “Sezession” magazine and the above-mentioned “COMPACT-Magazin”.

113 See YouTube (19 May 2021).

114 Ibid.

regarding the emergence of new actors and possible changes of focus in terms of specific ideological characteristics.

V. Dissemination of antisemitic ideas

Antisemitism is made public in different ways. The following chapter provides examples of different forms of dissemination, with Internet platforms and social media representing the most important channels.

1. Internet platforms and social media

Antisemitic agitation has been shifting to the digital space of Internet and social media platforms, forums and websites for years. This continuous process has been boosted by the coronavirus pandemic. The anonymity that is common on the Internet and the simple, fast and mostly unfiltered forms of communication it provides create an attractive and comparatively secure space for all kinds of extremist ideologies. It is easier to exchange ideas with like-minded people; therefore, individuals with more or less pronounced antisemitic and/or right-wing extremist attitudes soon find themselves in a digital “echo chamber” or “confirmation bubble”. One of the risks this involves is that individuals can radicalise and reinforce their antisemitic attitudes, which may have been only latent before.

The digital world of antisemitism is highly diverse. It ranges from websites and vlogs of right-wing extremist influencers, such as the self-appointed “Volkslehrer” (“people’s teacher”) Nikolai Nerling,¹¹⁵ to solidarity websites for convicted Holocaust deniers.¹¹⁶ There are right-wing extremist video portals, e.g. the portal “Donnersender” (“Thunder channel”),¹¹⁷ which has been



Overtly antisemitic video on the video portal “WTube”

shut down, or the video portal Wtube,¹¹⁸ which has a



Metapedia - Die alternative Enzyklopädie

connection with Attila Hildmann; these portals hold and/or held a vast number of visual and sound recordings containing antisemitic propaganda, along with videos produced by users. The entries of wiki platforms such as the right-wing extremist encyclopaedia “Metapedia” include a large number of antisemitic and Holocaust-denying articles in several languages.¹¹⁹ There are also online shops offering right-wing extremist items or

115 Website “Der Volkslehrer” (“The people’s teacher”).

116 Website “Wir sind Horst” (“We are Horst”) and website “Freiheit für Haverbeck” (“Freedom for Haverbeck”).

117 Video portal “Donnersender” (“Thunder channel”). The website has been inaccessible since February 2021.

118 Video portal “WTube”.

119 Platform “Metapedia”.

publishers and organisations distributing Holocaust-denying publications.¹²⁰ Furthermore, the Internet has an uncountable number of forums, groups and social media channels in which antisemitic convictions are shared. There is currently a multitude of possibilities to discuss and spread right-wing extremist and antisemitic ideologies and even terrorist violent fantasies and plans, in comparatively undisturbed spaces.

In 2020 the German security agencies successfully took action against members of the Goyim Partei Deutschland (GDP/Goyim Party of Germany).¹²¹ This group was mainly active on the Russian social media platform vk; its stated aim was to destroy the Jews all over the world. GDP members openly spread antisemitic hate propaganda, within and outside the group, in remarkably extreme ways. At the behest of the Federal Public Prosecutor at the Federal Court of Justice, search measures were carried out against six members in July 2020. Two ringleaders were arrested. After that, the group ceased its activities. On 7 May 2021 three leading GDP members were charged with forming a criminal organisation (section 129 of the German Criminal Code) and incitement of masses (section 130 of the German Criminal Code) at the Düsseldorf Higher Regional Court. Search measures against other members were also carried out in the same month. Further investigation proceedings are ongoing.

Digitisation is clearly an ongoing trend as regards the right-wing extremist scene as well as antisemitism, and the coronavirus pandemic has further contributed to the process. Even taking into account only the Clearnet,¹²² i.e. the part of the Internet that is universally accessible, there are uncountable secure and low-threshold options for antisemitic and right-wing extremist actors to spread and find antisemitic content and to exchange ideas and network with one another.

So-called alternative platforms also play a decisive role in this, meaning websites or apps which do not belong in the same category as classic (social media) sites such as Facebook, Instagram or Twitter. This includes, for example, micro blogging services like Gab, image boards like 4chan or video portals like BitChute. Such alternative platforms are especially popular among individuals who have been subject to deplatforming, i.e. the permanent exclusion of certain groups of users from a classic platform by the latter's operators.

Due to deplatforming processes on the established platforms, users migrate to alternative platforms and messenger services (e.g. vk, Telegram) which are not as strict about deleting content. They prefer services offering encrypted communication and a high degree of ano-

120 E.g. the online shop "Castle Hill Publishers".

121 The term "goyim" is derived from the Yiddish word "goi" for non-Jews. The group is not a political party in the sense of the Political Parties Act.

122 "Clearnet" is a term used for the part of the Internet that is universally accessible, as distinguished from what is called the darknet.

nymity. These technical infrastructures are increasingly used as communication and propaganda tools for the spreading of antisemitic convictions.

The extent of antisemitic communication and/or propaganda on the different alternative platforms varies since their operators have widely divergent approaches to supervision and control. Some platform operators provide their own sets of rules and systematically delete content that violates them. Others are less consistent in deleting content or only delete it with a certain delay, which is why antisemites prefer these platforms in order to spread their ideology. Another reason why anonymous alternative platforms may appear especially attractive to the right-wing extremist scene is that registering for most of these platforms requires little effort and that some of them can be used without providing personal data.

A lot of antisemitic agitation takes place on diverse alternative online platforms. For instance, right-wing extremist actors make intensive use of image boards, which for this reason often



“Happy Merchant” meme posted on the image board 4chan

feature antisemitic posts. Image boards are online forums which allow users to spread texts, pictures and audio or PDF files anonymously and without registration. A means of communication that is increasingly used on image boards, but also on various other platforms, are memes. Memes are pictures, slogans, GIFs or videos that are shared on the Internet and are suited to convey complex messages with a simple combination of pictures and text. The sharing of antisemitic memes has become firmly established in the right-wing extremist online scene. One of

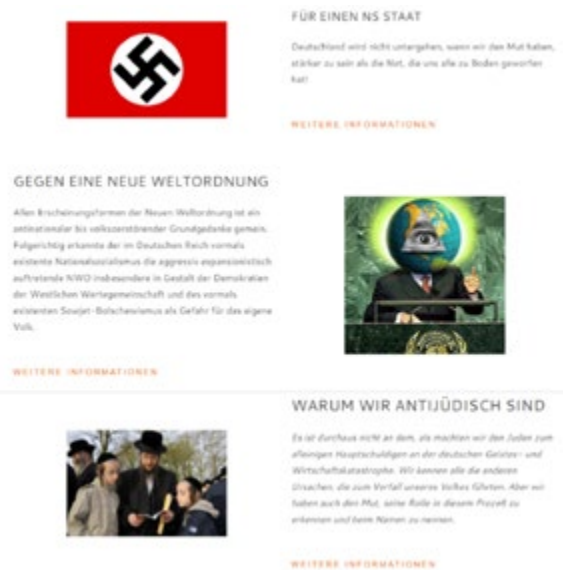
countless “humorous” examples is the meme “Happy Merchant”, an antisemitic caricature that often takes the form of memes.

The meme shows a man whose appearance is based on a racist characterisation of Jews. It is often shared in connection with antisemitic conspiracy theories, Holocaust denial or anti-Jewish propaganda. Large numbers of such memes, but also other antisemitic posts, can be found on image boards such as 4chan.org, 8kun.top or kohlchan.net.



“Happy Merchant” meme on the website “The Daily Stormer”

An example of another type of alternative platform that is used for the massive spreading of antisemitic content is the multi-language website “MZW News”, which has existed since 2014.¹²³



Site notice of the website “MZW News” (as of June 2021)

“MZW News” is a right-wing extremist news portal. According to its operators, its purpose is to report “truthfully on the latest events in Germany, Europe and the world, without fear of reprisals, in order to defend freedom of speech” and to “put right historical events [...] and also write the truth about Adolf Hitler and National Socialism as well as the Jews.”¹²⁴ As can be seen from the site notice of “MZW News”, its operators are openly committed to the goal of establishing a Nazi state in Germany.

Faktencheck: Der Holocaust und die Juden



Article on the website “MZW News”

The platform is run in a more professional way than others. It illustrates a strategy of deliberate cross-platform communication by right-wing extremist actors. Pseudojournalistic and pseudoscientific articles on various topics (politics, history, economy, law, literature) are regularly published here. These articles deal with current international events, but the website also features various articles which openly downplay or deny the Holocaust and spread antisemitic messages

123 “Mut zur Wahrheit” (“Dare the truth”) news; website “MZW News”.

124 Ibid. The website’s design and site notice were altered in June/July 2021.

and related conspiracy theories. Other content bluntly glorifies Adolf Hitler and National Socialism.¹²⁵

In addition to the website and its social network “MZW Live”,¹²⁶ “MZW News” also offers a streaming service (“MZW KINO”) and a video platform (“MZW Tube”) which are used to spread right-wing extremist videos and propaganda material.¹²⁷

“MZW Live” is one of many alternatives to Facebook. It explicitly targets German users who have been subject to deplatforming and/or cannot freely express their right-wing extremist ideas on other platforms due to the latter’s community rules and deletion practices. In spite of its well-designed layout and the fact that its functions are comparable to those of Facebook, this social network has not attracted many users so far. However, the users who have registered on the platform make massive use of it massively in order to spread their right-wing extremist, in particular antisemitic, ideology. For instance, they share “Happy Merchant” propaganda memes and comment them accordingly. Some users have given their entire profile pages an anti-Jewish appearance, with the profile picture, profile banner and their posts referring to antisemitic conspiracy constructs or glorifying the Nazis’ anti-Jewish policies. The platform also has subpages such as “Gaskammertemperatur” (“Gas chamber temperature”), where it is denied that the National Socialists murdered Jews with poison gas. “MZW Live” users can give such pages a like. This is complemented by a channel and a chat group on Telegram as well as by a smartphone app.



Profile picture with “Happy Merchant” motif of a “MZW-Live” user

On the darknet, there are platforms that can only be accessed via special networks like the Tor network. It is not possible to view those sites with a regular web browser without a special client since the darknet is separate from the normal Internet. Users are mostly anonymous on the darknet, making it a digital space that enables them to spread antisemitic content in a way that is uncomplicated and, most of all, goes unpunished.

This actually happens a lot on the darknet, as is shown by an example from the now closed forum “Deutschland im Deep Web” (“Germany on the deep web”), where a user commented on his own post as follows: “We wish everyone a merry Christmas! Except for the Jews, wogs, niggers and other vermin that should be exterminated. Sieg Heil and Heil Hitler.” Furthermore, in a discussion on “What will it be like in 2021?”, antisemitic conspiracy theories were spread regarding the supposedly imminent “New World Order” and the so-called Great Replace-

125 See e.g. “MZW News” (25 April 2020, 11 May 2020, 18 September 2019).

126 The platform has since been taken offline and replaced by the website “Youprofil”, which is also run by “MZW News”.

127 Video portal “MZW KINO” and video portal “MZW Tube”.

ment. The forum's members blame Jews, who in their view are responsible for social injustice or crises like the coronavirus pandemic.



Meme shared via the messenger service Telegram

Today, the messenger service Telegram is no longer an alternative online platform in the classic sense. It has attracted a large number of users and become well known, which makes it comparable to other popular messenger services. Nevertheless, Telegram is a classic alternative platform which, due to deplatforming, has many right-wing extremist users. Since it offers relative anonymity and a low degree of moderation, Telegram is currently a central communication, information and networking tool for right-wing extremists. Due to its popularity among right-wing extremist users, much more anti-

semitic content is shared here than on other alternative platforms. Antisemitic statements on Telegram, however, are no less extreme than anywhere else. For instance, users can join antisemitic groups such as the one called “Patriotische Europäer gegen die Zionisierung des Abendlandes” (“Patriotic Europeans against the Zionisation of the Occident”), which already has several hundred members. In these Telegram groups, antisemitism and fantasies of violence are regularly shared in an open and sometimes disinhibited manner. For example, the following statements have been made:

“Biontech, Pfizer, Moderna, Astrazenika [sic!] are ALL Jewish companies, you can read that anywhere, it is no secret. Back in the old days, the Jew poisoned the well, and today there are vaccines. The Jew has always prepared poisons, and by the way, Bill Gates ALSO wears a kippa...”

“My opinion on the Rothschild Khazar Mafia¹²⁸, RKM, which hides behind the Jews, they are no humans!”

“This group is a fine explosive mix. The death blow to the FRG Jews’ Republic.”

“There is no other way! The only thing those stone-cold psychos [“the Jews”] understand is brutal action!!!! There has been peaceful talking for so long, and we can see what good it did us... Speaking of unconventional Jews and all the other hippie dumbasses.”

128 The “Khazar Jews” are at the centre of an antisemitic world conspiracy theory. Allegedly, they are descendants of the Central Asian/Caucasian Khazars who supposedly converted to Judaism in the Early Middle Ages and now secretly control the world.

It is also possible to follow antisemitic channels. For example, there is a channel with the title “JUDENHASS” (“Hatred of Jews”) and the user name “KAMPFDEM-JUDEN” (“Fight the Jew”).



Meme shared via the messenger service Telegram

In conclusion, a certain antisemitic “background noise” can be found in most relevant groups, ranging from the scene of coronavirus deniers to networking groups of “classic” right-wing extremists. In many cases, antisemitism serves as the lowest common denominator.

It is remarkable how often the messenger service Telegram is used for the spreading of antisemitic content. In this way, it contributes to the consolidation of an antisemitic world view, at least among its users.

2. Right-wing extremist music spreading antisemitism

The spreading of ideas that are xenophobic, racist, antisemitic, glorify National Socialism and deny the Holocaust is a fundamental characteristic of the right-wing extremist music scene. Different strategies are used to sell right-wing extremist discs, and right-wing extremist ideas are spread with varying intensity. The right-wing extremist music scene continues to be dominated by various rock and punk styles.

In order to avoid prosecution, the producers have their discs checked for possible legal violations before publishing them. Products with punishable content and featuring openly right-wing extremist and antisemitic statements are sometimes produced abroad.¹²⁹

Moreover, it is not uncommon that discs are sold exclusively within the scene and for a limited period only. These products cannot be bought via publicly accessible channels. Due to their non-public character, their content is often openly xenophobic, antisemitic and racist and also includes concrete threats and calls for violence against individuals and groups. BzKJ (Federal Centre for the Media Protection of Children and Adolescents) continuously examines such products, assesses them in terms of punishability and adds them to its List of Media Harmful to Young Persons, if applicable.

As it is more or less protected and anonymous, the digital space plays an important role in the dissemination of right-wing extremist music. Antisemitic productions reach a much larger audience via social networks, music portals and scene forums than via conventional channels.

¹²⁹ The share of these CDs in the entire scene is below 10 per cent.

The band Endlösung (Final Solution) can serve to exemplify the spreading of open antisemitism, content inciting the masses and obvious glorification of National Socialism. For instance, the song “Etwas Arbeit” (“Some work”) from their album “Unter dem Hakenkreuz” (“Under the swastika”), which was published in Finland and has been classified as inciting the masses, has the following lyrics:

*“And off they go to the bathhouse with washcloths and soap
There’ll be no washing, Zyklon B goes down well
Yeah, yeah, yeah, the Jew is back
Oh, oh, oh, I’m so happy
Now, now, now, we have something to do
Nice, nice, nice, he must take a shower
He is scowling, but I know what’s next
There’ll be the rail for shots in the neck, and then the furnace is lit
And those who can still laugh will be kept
Because every camp doctor likes to have some work
[...] And those who don’t like this song are not among the pure and good
But among the few who are scum, I mean all the Jews”¹³⁰*

On the same album, the song “Unerwünscht” (“Unwanted”) calls for the expulsion of all Jews from Germany:

*“Soon it will be nice in Germany
Because all the Jews will have to leave
The big and the small Jews
It’s no use screaming and crying
Out with the Jews, out with the Jews
Out of our German house”¹³¹*

Apart from open hostility towards Jews and the glorification of National Socialism, antisemitic conspiracy theories play an important role in the lyrics. The “Jewish world conspiracy” is a very popular motive; here, classic antisemitic codes and stereotypes are used to fabricate about a world-dominating Jewish elite that operates in secret. Such stereotypes include, for instance, the control of global finance or “the capital” in the form of “high finance”, the control of global and national politics or “the Jews” supposed religiously-motivated urge to subdue humanity. For instance, in its song “An seiner Nase” (“By his nose”), which has been classified as harmful to minors and promoting racial hate, the band Kahlkopf (Baldhead) states:

130 Endlösung: Title 10: Etwas Arbeit, in: “Unter dem Hakenkreuz (Re-Edition)” (“Under the swastika [re-edition]”), A. H. Records 2019, CD. BzKJ added the CD to its List of Media Harmful to Young Persons on 7 January 2020.

131 Endlösung: Title 03: Unerwünscht, in: *ibid.*

*“He is driven by profit, he wants to do business
And increase his gains a thousandfold
He lends you his money and wishes you luck
But he wants it back with interest and compound interest
He is the one who pulls the strings
Who lies to you and thinks for you
He lets your sons go to war
And lets them croak for oil and dollars
Today you must not even call him by his name
But you shall know him by his nose
Today you must not even call him by his name
But you shall know him by his nose”¹³²*

Such agitation patterns are often employed together with the hypothesis of a population replacement, which is widespread in right-wing extremism and based on conspiracy ideas that are ultimately antisemitic. Racist, xenophobic and Islamophobic ideologemes are combined to claim that there is a plan of sinister powers to destroy Germany and/or Europe by means of a controlled influx of migrants from “racially inferior” peoples (“Umvolkung”, ethnic replacement). “The Jews” are usually held responsible for this supposed plan, e.g. in the song “Volkstod” (“Death of the people”) by the band Blutstraße (Blood street), which glorifies National Socialism and racial ideology:

*“Take a closer look yourself
At what really happens in this country
And who pulls the strings behind the scenes
Organising our people’s death
Attacking us with foreign peoples
But you never question it
You are lackeys, brain-dead slaves
Germany, good night! Soon the deed will be done
Your people is going extinct without anybody noticing it, your people is eliminating itself
Sinister powers are at work – death of the people! Death of the people!”¹³³*

132 Kahlkopf: Title 09: An seiner Nase, in: “Teppichmesser-Terroristen (Re-Edition)” (“Carpet knife terrorists [re-edition]”), Zeughaus 2019, CD. BzKJ added the CD to its List of Media Harmful to Young Persons on 7 January 2020.

133 Blutstraße: Title 08: Volkstod, in: “Unterm Deutschen Fahnenband” (“Under the German battle streamer”), OPOS Records 2019, CD. BzKJ added the CD to its List of Media Harmful to Young Persons on 25 August 2020.

It follows that antisemitism as an ideological connector of right-wing extremism also plays a major role in right-wing extremist music. Both open and encoded antisemitism are widespread and can be found on discs in varying degrees of intensity.

3. Publications spreading antisemitism

There are several publishers, based in Germany and abroad, who disseminate right-wing extremist ideas in the form of books and magazines as well as visual and audio material. Their main purpose is to reinforce existing convictions, but the publishers also intend to recruit and radicalise readers. It is thus no surprise that time and again, products of publishers that are well-known in the scene are found among the property of violent criminals motivated by right-wing extremism. The publishers work with various ideological aspects: there are historical revisionist, völkisch, neo-Nazi, conspiracy-theoretical and also antisemitic publications.



The publication “Volk in Bewegung – Der Reichsbote” (VIB/“A people in motion – Messenger of the Reich”) is an example in this context. It is sold by the publisher Nordland Verlag in cooperation with a well-known NPD official and frequently features antisemitism in the form of an alleged Jewish world conspiracy, conveyed by codes such as “high finance” or the “New World Order”, among others:

“As for politicians, this would actually make sense. They have been the slaves of high finance for a long time, but at least they are well paid for their role.”¹³⁴

“In the US, ‘they’ have decided for decades who becomes president or what president is ousted.”¹³⁵

“The people behind the scenes are the greatest criminals in world history. [...] The people in the background who run and control everything that happens aim at nothing short of ruling the world: the ‘One World’ or ‘New World Order’, also called ‘globalism.’¹³⁶

Furthermore, antisemitic prejudice can time and again be found that is based on religious considerations and is common in parts of the right-wing extremist scene. In these instances, quotes from the Bible or the Torah are often used to establish the supposed thirst for power of “the Jews”:

“The ‘One World’ was adopted from the heritage of the British Empire, but at the same time, it has at its core the Mosaic claim to world domination according to Isaiah 60:12: ‘For the nation or kingdom that will not serve you [Israel] will perish.’

134 Wuttke, Roland: Das Masken-Regime (The mask regime), in: VIB 5/2020, p. 4 f., specifically p. 5.

135 Hennig, Rigolf: Das Land der begrenzten Möglichkeiten (The land of limited opportunity), in: VIB 5/2020, p. 26 f., specifically p. 27.

136 Hennig, Rigolf: Die Plandemie (The plandemic), in: VIB 1/2021, p. 4 f., specifically p. 4.

The two systems have joined forces in the ‘Hebrew-Anglo-Saxon symbiosis’ [...] so that today, Anglo-Saxon predatory trade and Mosaic clandestine trade form an unholy, but successful alliance.”¹³⁷

VIB magazine also continuously spreads ideas such as the “population replacement”, which have increasingly been linked to the coronavirus pandemic since early 2020:

“We understand that there are plans for a ‘New World Order’. A world order in which the peoples shall perish in a light brown Eurasian-Negroid mixture with a limited intelligence quotient (IQ). Those plans are already being executed. [...] For now, there can only be speculations about certain powers behind the scenes who are planning and implementing this ‘New World Order’ – let’s call them ‘they’.”¹³⁸

Der Schelm, a very small publishing house known for its particularly marked antisemitic agitation, suffered a heavy setback in December 2020: around 80 pallets with about 52,000 pieces of printed material were seized in connection with investigation proceedings initiated by the Leipzig Public Prosecutor’s Office on the grounds of suspected incitement of the masses.

Antisemitism can also be identified as a central ideological feature in publications of the traditional and völkisch scene. For example, there are antisemitic statements and content in the right-wing extremist publication “Mensch und Maß” (“Man and moderation”) of 2020/21. This publication can be associated with the right-wing extremist organisation Bund für Gotterkenntnis (Ludendorff) e. V. (Association for the recognition of God (Ludendorff) regd. assoc.), which is characterised by antisemitism and racism. In the “Mensch und Maß” edition of February 2021, a letter to the editor of the newspaper Jüdische Allgemeine was printed which employs classic victim blaming to make Jews partly responsible for antisemitism:

“So in the cold light of day, being chosen comes to nothing: ‘And that’s it’. In the cold light of day, religious elevation is an obstacle to international understanding and friendship among nations, and in my view, it is a non-negligible reason for anti-semitism. As a people, you will be confronted with that time and again, all over the world, if you do not meet the ‘peoples of the world’ on an equal footing.”¹³⁹

Huttenbriefe
für Dofortum, Galtar, Wahrheit und Nocht



The traditional and völkisch scene’s ideological proximity to antisemitism also becomes clear in the “Huttenbriefe” (“Hutten letters”) published by the Freundeskreis Ulrich von Hutten (Friends of Ulrich von Hutten). In the double issue of March and April 2020, the author refers to an alleged “biased judiciary” in Germany and declares his solidarity with repeatedly convicted Holocaust deniers:

137 Hennig, Rigolf: Das Land der begrenzten Möglichkeiten (The land of limited opportunity), in: VIB 5/2020, p. 26 f., specifically p. 26.

138 Hennig, Rigolf: Das neue Jahr und die Zukunft (The new year and the future), in: VIB 1/2020, p. 3 f., specifically p. 3.

139 Letter to the editor of the Jüdische Allgemeine Zeitung, in: Mensch und Maß 2/2020, p. 83-85, specifically p. 85.

“You may or may not agree with them. However, whereas criminals can count on mild punishment, women and men are sentenced to long prison terms today simply for making a remark (not an insult or anything like that!).”¹⁴⁰

Explicit antisemitism with references to conspiracy theories can also be found in the articles of the “National Journal” (NJ). This magazine is now published exclusively online; for years, it has been spreading content that is right-wing extremist, reproduces conspiracy ideologies and glorifies National Socialism. A large share of its articles is antisemitic.



Since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic in early 2020, the NJ has mainly been propagating antisemitic narratives of the alleged “Great Reset” and secret world elites destroying and subjugating the global population:

“Rockefeller, Rothschild and most of the other great global puppet masters have added the ‘vaccination’ weapon to the original population-reducing mechanisms such as war and famines. The scheme of a complete change of the world, which in terms of planning [...] has reached its final phase since 2010, involves more than reducing the majority of mankind by means of artificially created pandemics in order to be able to operate with ‘vaccines’. In fact [...], people’s livelihoods are to be destroyed in order to establish mankind’s thrall-like dependency on a more-than-Orwellian system. But first and foremost, what little remains of white people is to be finally obliterated as part of the racist total terror.”¹⁴¹

Overt antisemitism can also time and again be found in NJ articles:

“Today, ‘the Jewish question’ is the paramount topic across the entire Covid resistance movement with its 30 million members – in Germany alone. We, the classic uncoverers, are altar boys compared to that. This new resistance is impetuous, they hardly make a difference between global Jews and normal Jews. [...] In this context, people claim that the Jews want to exterminate us. In normal times, this would be regarded as an allegorical figure of speech, but in times of a globalist hate system, every word must be taken literally. Certainly, not all Jews want to exterminate us Germans, but the Talmud instructions are unequivocal since they are binding for all professing Jews. [...] Today, it is considered hate when someone says that the Jews have too much power in America and Europe. Well, that is something that the Jews even say themselves, and they are very proud of it. [...] And yet, those who reveal

140 Die Freiheitssehnsucht der Deutschen. Die Befreiungstat von 1989 – Politische Korrektheit – Aufbruch seit 2014 (The Germans’ longing for freedom. The liberation act of 1989 – Political correctness – Change since 2014), in: “Huttenbriefe für Volkstum, Kultur, Wahrheit und Recht” (“Hutten letters for national tradition, culture, truth and right”) 03-04/2020, p. 23-26, specifically p. 26.

141 Website “Concept Veritas” (4 July 2021).

the truth are villainised, only because they unmask the global perpetrators and scoundrels.”¹⁴²

4. Antisemitic mail sent to public bodies

Letters or emails with antisemitic content being sent to public bodies are another phenomenon. In some cases they are anonymous, such as an email sent to the citizens’ service centre of the Federal Ministry of the Interior in February 2021. The email consisted of a single sentence: “*Jews are like CANCER and CANCER must be wiped out!!!*”

However, public bodies are also addressed by individuals who openly state their name and address. For instance, another federal ministry received an email in early 2021 with the subject “*Bemessungsgrundlage Fördergeld für Zentralrat der Juden*” (“*Assessment basis for grants to the Central Council of Jews*”). The sender complained about a supposed preferential treatment of Jewish organisations by the Federal Republic of Germany in financial terms. In this context, the sender, who gave his full name, tried to cast doubt on the existence of the Holocaust:

“By unnecessarily limiting the amount of fees, you try to distract observers from the fact that there seems to be no true legal basis for assessing the amount of grants to the Central Council of Jews. Neither the grants database nor the Basic Law mention a legal basis that allows a group to receive subsidies and grants without doing anything in return. Would it not follow that for legal equality, other groups could claim the same? For example the Romani people, the minorities of persecuted German refugees, the Salafists etc.? Maybe the Central Council of Jews receives support because it is still claimed that Germany has a collective guilt from World War II. However, it is controversial among scientists whether the Holocaust in the form of six million murdered Jews really happened. This is explained in publications by Jürgen Graf and other foreign scientists, e.g. Ernst Zündel.”¹⁴³

When the first edition of the Situation Report on Antisemitism was published in 2020, this motivated some individuals to contact public bodies, including BfV. For instance, someone sent a letter to BfV’s Director General in August 2020 and enclosed a comprehensive treatise titled “*Zionisten und Zentralratsjuden. Ein notwendiger Hinweis*” (“*Zionists and Central Council Jews. A necessary comment*”). The letter vilified Israel as a racist apartheid state and called the Federal Republic of Germany an “*authoritarian, oligarchical state*” that is externally

142 Website “*Concept Veritas*” (16 June 2021).

143 Both Jürgen Graf and Ernst Zündel (1939-2017) are not scientists but Holocaust deniers.

controlled by “financial globalists” and lacks a legitimate constitution. The treatise contained numerous attacks on Israel and on various representatives of the Central Council of Jews.

Also in August 2020, a woman emailed BfV several times with the subject “Meine Beschwerde über das Lagebild zum Antisemitismus in Deutschland” (“My complaint about the Situation Report on Antisemitism in Germany”). In her opinion, the Situation Report is a manifestation of *“the new witch hunt in the name of antisemitism. It is exactly that kind of level, from defamatory to offensive.”*

In her emails, the author refers to well-known antisemites of the 19th century as well as to the publicist Wilhelm Marr¹⁴⁴ and the composer Richard Wagner.¹⁴⁵ She also accuses Jews themselves of a “racial discourse”:

“In his book Lessing contra Sem, Wilhelm Marr points out that Lessing’s argumentation is unsound when he compares Judaism to Christianity and Islam. Marr was one of the louder voices, a publicist, but he probably also got a lot of input from conversations. Richard Wagner, too, pointed out in his defamation that synagogues are people’s synagogues. [...] But I presume that these people realised early on that Jews are organised in a different way, etc. Jews are organised according to tribal law, which I suppose can be regarded as racial. Jews use a racial discourse themselves.”

The same author sent the following petition to the Petitions Committee of the German Bundestag in November 2020: *“This petition demands that Judaism be treated as a private affair in future and that no propaganda be spread for it anymore.”*

She reasoned as follows:

“Judaism refers to a people that behaves like a sect. It has its own language, its own traditions and its own religious cosmology. [...] And Judaism does not belong to general German cultural heritage. [...] The play Nathan the Wise, which tells the fairy tale of Judaism being like Christianity and Islam, is part of the Jews’ propaganda literature and has no real cultural value. It should be removed from the curriculum. And Germans must no longer be importuned with the sect itself. The Jewish sect of Judaism is allowed to run an ethnic association in Germany that is supported by the German state, while at the same time Germans are prosecuted

144 Wilhelm Marr (1819-1904) was the founder of the Antisemitenliga (League of Antisemites, 1879), the first political association of antisemites in the German Empire.

145 In 1850 Richard Wagner (1813-1883) wrote the antisemitic essay “Judaism in Music”.

and discriminated against for presuming to form a private association. This is a SCANDAL!!!!!!!!!!!!!! There is no legal basis for this.

Furthermore, there is a Jewish lobby wielding political influence, and that should be acknowledged and kept in check. And there is the antisemitism propaganda faction whose main objective is probably to completely destroy all life of the mind in Germany. The Jews have their own state now, and they have no right to turn Germany into a second Jewish apartheid state.”

As early as May 2020, an “open letter” was sent to the president of the Robert Koch Institute (RKI). Identical letters were sent to a large number of recipients from politics, academia and the media as well as to student associations.

The text is several pages long. It argues that the measures to contain the coronavirus pandemic are part of a Jewish conspiracy to destroy the national states and to “*destroy the indigenous white peoples of Europe*”, calling the virus “harmless” in comparison.

The president of RKI is defamed as an accessory to this conspiracy who knowingly deceives the public. The pamphlet ends with an indirect threat:

And as for you personally, veterinarian Wieler: you will not escape those who you expect to put up with organ damage by forcing them to wear face masks – as a representative of the Jew Merkel – because you are subservient to the cabal¹⁴⁶ [...]. You will have to picture everything else for yourself, whether you will hang from a lamppost or from the closest window. At that time, I will only be a silent witness with folded hands, fasting and absorbed in meditation.”

The email also contains various links and attachments, mostly collections of quotations that are supposed to prove the presumed sinister operations of Jews.

VI. Antisemitism in the context of the coronavirus pandemic

Since early 2020 the coronavirus pandemic has dominated public and political discourse as well as peoples’ private lives. The long-lasting pandemic situation involves ambiguities, uncertainties and risks that are difficult to explain, to comprehend or even to resolve. As in other times of crisis, these circumstances and the resulting feeling of uncertainty make many people long for simple explanations. Thus, these side effects of the coronavirus pandemic also open the door to conspiracy theories and extremist ideas.

¹⁴⁶ The “cabal” is a designation for the protagonists of a supposed Jewish world conspiracy. The term is particularly common among the followers of the QAnon scene (see chapter VI, 3.)

This chapter describes the different forms of antisemitism that can be found in the context of the coronavirus protests, the way in which the coronavirus pandemic itself has led to the radicalisation of individuals and which role QAnon has played in this context.

1. Antisemitism in the context of coronavirus protests

The coronavirus pandemic has boosted the spread of sometimes centuries-old antisemitic conspiracy ideas and made them reach mainstream society. One of them is the idea of a secret (Jewish) elite controlling the world and aiming to enslave the world population.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, antisemitism has manifested itself mainly in two forms: Firstly, as encoded antisemitism embedding the pandemic in a conspiracy-ideological argumentation, and secondly as secondary antisemitism playing down the National Socialist persecution of Jews and the Holocaust by equating them with the governmental measures to contain the pandemic.

Antisemitism spreads most through conspiracy theories that have an antisemitic connotation, use antisemitic narratives or have an antisemitic core. The simple and overly simple explanatory models typical of conspiracy theories, including the coronavirus-related theories circulating since 2020, have contributed to the continuous spreading of conspiracy-ideological thinking. This process has been accelerated by the lockdowns and contact restrictions imposed in response to the pandemic and the resulting focus on cyberspace.

For the most part, the coronavirus pandemic is embedded in already existing antisemitic conspiracy theories. Most of the coronavirus-related antisemitic narratives can thus be subsumed under the headline of a “Jewish world conspiracy” following the model of the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion”. They are usually about a secret power in control of the world that uses the coronavirus pandemic as an instrument or as a part of its secret plan to establish a “New World Order” (NWO) that aims to enslave the population, to establish a world government or even to wipe out a considerable part of the world population.

The individuals and (supposed) groups mentioned are always the same and reveal the antisemitic content of these ideologies: George Soros, the Rothschild family, “the Zionists”, “the Bilderberg Group”, “Illuminati” and “Freemasons” as well as “globalists” and “high finance”. All of them, the individuals as well as the usually nebulous groups, are either known to be Jewish or have similar connotations. Not few of the conspiracy believers – in obvious contradiction to the truth – also think that the IT entrepreneur and billionaire Bill Gates is a Jew. Slogans suggesting that the above groups and individuals are the “masterminds” behind the pandemic are common at protest rallies against coro-

**GIB GATES
KEINE
CHANCE**

Sticker on the website
“Politaufkleber”
[“political stickers”]

navirus-related governmental measures.¹⁴⁷ One example is the slogan “*Gib Gates keine Chance*” (“Don’t give Gates a chance”).¹⁴⁸

Bearing in mind the connection to traditional antisemitic narratives, it is no surprise that coronavirus-related conspiracy ideas are also propagated in right-wing extremist circles. The “Great Reset”, for example, is such a general catchphrase circulating in the right-wing extremist scene. Right-wing extremist conspiracy ideologists, political parties, organisations and influencers have been promoting this idea continuously since 2020.

The agitation against vaccines, which sometimes has antisemitic tendencies, has gained new impetus, at the latest since the start of vaccinations in late 2020. Ignoring any rational and scientific reasoning, strict anti-vaxxers occasionally claim that “the Jews” now also make use of vaccinations in their attempt to accomplish their plans of gaining power over humankind.

Agitation against supposed “forced vaccinations” is particularly loaded with antisemitic notions, according to which the pandemic is just a pretext to inject humans with microchips or nanocrystals along with the vaccine, so as to make them obedient to the “New World Order” and the powers behind, or even to kill them. Moreover, it is claimed that alleged or real Jewish vaccine developers are massively enriching themselves with the vaccines. Assertions of that kind are not new. As early as the 19th century, the rejection of vaccines often went along with hatred against Jews. In his pamphlet “*Die Judenfrage als Racen-, Sitten und Culturfrage*” (“The Jewish question as a matter of race, customs and culture”) published in 1881, Eugen Dühring¹⁴⁹ claimed that vaccines were a superstition invented by Jewish doctors to increase their wealth. In 1935 Julius Streicher, the founder and editor of the National Socialist smear sheet “*Der Stürmer*” (“The attacker”), called vaccines a “*toxin for the body and the race*” whose “*originator and promoter [...] was the Jew*”¹⁵⁰.

In addition to encoded antisemitism, secondary antisemitism is a recurrent factor, especially as part of the agitation against the measures to contain the pandemic. Some of the slogans used, symbols displayed and statements made at demonstrations and by various protagonists of these protests trivialise the persecution of Jews, the Holocaust and the crimes of the Nazi regime. Out of calculated provocation, lacking historical awareness or partly even ideological conviction, restrictions and regulations designed to counter the pandemic have been compared with actions and measures of the National Socialists or even the Holocaust. Such statements, used to delegitimise governmental action, do not constitute legitimate criticism but a

147 The image of the mastermind or puppet master is a classic antisemitic stereotype.

148 Imitating the popular slogan “Don’t give AIDS a chance”.

149 See Dühring, Eugen: *Die Judenfrage. Racen-, Sitten- und Culturfrage mit einer weltgeschichtlichen Antwort* (The Jewish question. A matter of race, customs and culture with an answer derived from world history), Karlsruhe/Leipzig 1881, p. 19; Eugen Dühring (1833–1921) was a main representative of racist antisemitism in the German Empire.

150 Streicher, Julius: *Artfremdes Eiweiß ist ein Gift* (Protein foreign to the species is poisonous), in: “*Deutsche Volksgesundheit aus Blut und Boden*” (“The German people’s health from blood and soil”), 01/1935.

trivialisation of the Holocaust and the crimes of the Nazi regime. This agitation can be classified as secondary antisemitism.

The most frequent manifestation of this phenomenon is the use of the known yellow Star of David with the words “unvaccinated” or “Covid19” on it. Imitating the “Jewish Star” used by the Nazis to stigmatise and persecute Jews, protesters denounce governmental protective measures as “fascistic” and present themselves as victims of governmental arbitrariness.



Protest protagonists and anti-vaxxers equating themselves with Jews persecuted by the Nazi regime are not unusual. Revisionist slogans trivialising the Holocaust like “*Impfen macht frei*” (“Vaccination will set you free”)¹⁵¹ are circulating online as well as at demonstrations. Moreover, statements can be found claiming that camps for unvaccinated or infected individuals are being set up in the style of the concentration camps of the Nazi regime.



Apart from delegitimising the state and its measures to contain the pandemic, this mainly serves the purpose of establishing a narrative of persecuted victims. Thus, there are not only comparisons with “the Jews” during the Nazi rule, but also references to individuals like Anne Frank, who are posthumously used for a specific purpose.

Whether such a trivialisation of the Nazis’ persecution of the Jews and the Holocaust occurs deliberately or maybe “only” out of thoughtlessness can only be decided on a case-by-case basis. Deliberate provocation while tacitly accepting the antisemitic dimension seems to have an important function for parts of the protesters, as it leads to media attention and an extended reach.

The continuous spreading and repetition of such narratives gradually makes them appear more normal. Being close to right-wing extremism in terms of content, antisemitic conspiracy theories and revisionist relativisations offer a considerable potential of radicalisation and may open the door to right-wing extremist ideologemes. However, for the time being, such a development has not been observed on a large scale.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, right-wing extremist and antisemitic protagonists have repeatedly tried to associate themselves with the protests and the scene behind them and to exploit the pandemic for their own purposes. Antisemitism only plays a subordinate role in

151 Referring to the “Arbeit macht frei” (“Work will set you free”) signs above the entrances to Nazi concentration camps.

this context. The focus rather lies on the extension of their own reach and the exploitation of the pandemic for the purpose of delegitimising the state.

As to their attempt to associate themselves with the corona-related protests and the scene behind them, particular mention has to be made of “COMPACT-Magazin”. This magazine strongly supports the so-called “Querdenker” by means of special editions, interviews, articles and reports about demonstrations and live broadcasts on the “COMPACT-TV” video channel.¹⁵² Pandemic-related conspiracy theories are repeatedly covered, including the “Great Reset”.¹⁵³



Right-wing extremist video bloggers or self-proclaimed “journalists” can regularly be found among the protesters, for example the right-wing extremist Nikolai Nerling, who refers to himself as “Volkslehrer” (“people’s teacher”).¹⁵⁴ In principle, Nerling acts independently of the demonstrations and the organisational level but he adapts coronavirus-related narratives and is quite well-known at demonstrations.

Right-wing extremist actors who pick up on antisemitic narratives in the context of protests against governmental coronavirus-related protective measures and spread them themselves often aim to appeal to new circles of recipients and enlarge their own reach. However, this benefits also those right-wing extremists whose ideology has antisemitism as a core feature.

2. Radicalisation and antisemitism – an individual example

During the coronavirus pandemic, there have been several cases of individuals becoming politicised and radicalised. One example of a rapid radicalisation process and now overt and extreme antisemitism is Attila Hildmann.

Before the pandemic, Hildmann had made a name for himself as a vegan cook and cookbook author, having established a vegan snack bar and his own vegan product line. Until March 2020 Hildmann did not engage in politics, except for his involvement in animal protection. Since then, however, a process of pandemic-induced radicalisation has taken place, promot-



Telegram post by Attila Hildmann

ed in particular by Hildmann’s search for as much publicity as possible.

At an early point, Hildmann began to challenge the governmental measures to contain the pandemic as well as the pandemic itself on social media, spreading conspiracy-ideological

152 See for example “COMPACT-Magazin”, Compact Spezial no. 28, “Die Querdenker. Liebe und Revolution” (“Querdenker. Love and revolution”), 12/2020; YouTube (26 March 2021); *ibid.* (29 August 2020).

153 See for example “COMPACT-Magazin”, “Great Reset. Die teuflischen Pläne der globalen Elite” (“Great Reset. The satanic plans of the global elite”), 04/2021.

154 See for example the video blog “Der Volkslehrer” (“The people’s teacher”), 10 November 2020; *ibid.* (31 May 2021).

content. Repeated public appearances at demonstrations in Berlin and contacts to right-wing extremist networkers and conspiracy ideologists followed.

From the very beginning and with an increasing intensity, Hildmann used antisemitic codes when referring to those allegedly responsible for the supposed coronavirus world conspiracy. For example, he repeatedly mentioned “the Rothschild family”, “Bolshevism”, “the Bilderberg Group” and “the Freemasons”. Moreover, Hildmann identifies Jews and individuals characterised as Jewish like George Soros and Bill Gates as key actors of the supposed world conspiracy. Temporarily, he embraced QAnon contents and, as 2020 went on, to an increasing extent glorified National Socialism and Adolf Hitler in his contributions.

Hildmann has reached his latest verbal level of radicalisation so far in March 2021. Since then, he has refrained from coded communication and now quite overtly calls “the Jews” the enemy behind all evil in the world. Thousands of crudely antisemitic posts, the glorification of National Socialism and historical revisionism, including even the denial of the Holocaust, have been noted since.

Convinced to stand in the tradition of Hitler, Hildmann as a self-proclaimed “leader of the resistance” regularly promotes the legal purchase of weapons so as to be able to violently oppose the state’s security organs if necessary. Resistance against an alleged coronavirus dictatorship, compulsory measures and suppression continues to be the focus of his agitation.

Hildmann’s core statements have generally remained the same during his radicalisation. There have not been any significant changes. Already at an early point – though still encoded at that time – he identified “the Jews” as the enemy and as the masterminds behind what he now bluntly calls the “Jews’ republic”. In a Telegram post, Hildmann puts his worldview in a nutshell:

“Albert Bourla, the boss of Pfizer, is a Jew. Tal Zaks of Moderna is a Jew. Bill Gates is a Jew and works for the Jews Rockefeller and Rothschild. Zuckerberg [...] is a Jew. [...] Merkel is not a German but a Jew. 90% of the Federal Republic’s politicians in powerful positions are Jews! [...] The Jew is behind the Freemasons, Bilderberg, banks,



Telegram post by Attila Hildmann

pharma and weapons industry! The Illuminati are an order of Jews! The Jew was and is the enemy of all free peoples!”¹⁵⁵

Since February 2021 there has been an arrest warrant for Hildmann, with him being wanted by the police because of incitement of masses, among other things. He has been able to avoid being arrested until now and has been on the run.

3. Antisemitism in the context of QAnon

One phenomenon in particular has benefited from the lasting coronavirus pandemic, as it has become much more well-known, especially to the German public: QAnon. “QAnon”¹⁵⁶ QAnon is based on a conspiracy theory assuming that a satanic and paedophile elite controls the world in secret, aims at establishing a “New World Order” and strives to enslave humankind.

QAnon adherents, however, believe that resistance is forming against these efforts and that it manifests itself in the person of the prophetic whistle blower “Q” and parts of the US military under the leadership of Donald Trump.

According to QAnon, the secret elite, referred to as “cabal”, uses the network of the “Deep State” to control global developments. Moreover, this elite allegedly runs a secret global child trafficking network and commits kidnappings, sexual torture and ritual murders of minors on an industrial scale. Its aim, according to QAnon, is to obtain “adrenochrome”, a substance allegedly forming itself in the course of excessive child abuse that can supposedly be used not only as a powerful drug but also as a youth potion.

The core elements of Qanon can be illustrated by the following statement of the right-wing extremist conspiracy influencer Oliver Janich:

“Well, this is this satanic elite I have been talking about for years. [...] Well, we know for sure [...] that children are tortured and then split off personalities, which means that they become schizophrenic. And it is possible that adrenochrome then, so to speak, promotes a process in which these people, these children develop several personalities for protection. And the satanic elite then uses it as a drug. [...] That means, satanic rituals are imposed on children who then split off their personalities. [...] If asked what groups are behind it all, they will not say anything because otherwise their lives would be in danger. Obviously, we are talking about high-ranking individuals because they are the only ones in a position to commit these crimes without being caught, because they obviously control the judicial system. [...] And maybe I

155 Telegram channel “Attila Hildmann” (4 March 2021).

156 The term QAnon is only used by others. Its adherents refer to themselves just as “Anons” (derived from the word “anonymous”).

have to add: Those who do this are not human beings. [...] But that's what it's all about: to eliminate the satanic scum from the face of this earth."¹⁵⁷

QAnon began as a conspiracy theory in the US, having its origin in the 2016 “Pizzagate” affair.¹⁵⁸ Since early 2020, though, QAnon has been spreading to a considerable extent also in Germany. The criticism of governmental measures to fight the pandemic and related conspiracy ideas were the most important catalysts here.

QAnon has been built around the publications of the prophetic “Q”.¹⁵⁹ In October 2017 “Q” began to spread cryptic messages (known as “drops”) via the image board 4chan,¹⁶⁰ which were then interpreted by QAnon believers.¹⁶¹ This act of interpreting is of special significance within the scene, as all are encouraged to do their own research and present their interpretations.

As a result, QAnon is enormously compatible with other conspiracy theories, as everyone who feels like it can fit the “drops” into their own world view. This is why the QAnon adherents form an extremely heterogeneous scene offering uncountable expansions of the core narrative. Because of this participatory character, QAnon creates a sense of purpose and identity and is thus very attractive to its adherents.

A decentralised and broad online infrastructure of websites, forums, social media channels and groups has developed also in the German-speaking countries. The largest social media presence is the Telegram channel Qlobal-Change, which currently has more than 140,000 subscribers.¹⁶² The largest German-language website Qlobal-Change is connected to this channel.¹⁶³ In addition, there are innumerable international, national and regional presences. The particular features of the QAnon phenomenon encourage the decentralised production and spreading of content because the scene’s members are not only recipients of ideas but are also in a position to produce content themselves. Moreover, the scene is very dynamic and responds quickly to changes, for example when websites or accounts are closed down.

157 Website “Oliver Janich Investigativ” (2 April 2020).

158 During the 2016 US presidential election campaign, conspiracy myths circulated on image boards like 4chan and Reddit according to which a child trafficking network organised by presidential candidate Hillary Clinton was hidden in the basement of a Washington pizzeria. The myths spread quickly and did not disappear, so that on 4 February 2016 an armed conspiracy believer stormed the pizzeria in order to free the allegedly imprisoned children.

159 The identity of “Q” is still unknown. It can be assumed that “Q” is or was not just one individual but a group of several authors.

160 See chapter V, 1.

161 In the years that followed, “Q” sometimes published several hundreds of “drops”. After 4chan was cancelled, the activities continued on the successor image board 8chan or 8kun.

162 Date of information: February 2022.

163 See website Qlobal-Change (28 July 2021).

The combination of its compatibility and its ability to spread and recruit, together with the demonisation and delegitimisation of the state, its potential legitimisation of violence¹⁶⁴ and, finally, its antisemitic core narratives make QAnon particularly dangerous.

Even the secretly acting “Deep State” and the “cabal” are taken from the classic idea of the Jewish world conspiracy and the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion”. A look at the identities of the supposed “cabal” members confirms this assumption: Apart from the US Democrats, mainly Jews, Jewish groups and individuals or groups characterised as Jewish are considered to be part of the conspiracy. Among them are George Soros, Bill Gates, the Rothschild family as well as “the Freemasons”, “globalists”, “high finance” and “Hollywood”. It says on the Qlobal-Change website:

“Three families together constitute the NWO (House of Saud¹⁶⁵, Rothschild and Soros). Through many generations, their bloodlines have amassed riches and power. With the help of these riches/this power, they have formed a global cabal controlling many governments, officials, institutions and companies.”¹⁶⁶

Reproduced in the “adrenochrome” and “Pizzagate” narratives, the centuries-old antisemitic blood libel constitutes a central element of QAnon. The ritual torture of children and drinking of their blood was already imputed to Jews in the Middle Ages. The demonisation of the “cabal” as a union of satanist paedophile criminals resumes this pattern.

It is also because of its clearly antisemitic narratives that QAnon is well accepted among right-wing extremist actors, quite independently of whether they believe in its core statements or not. “COMPACT-Magazin” has reported about QAnon contents already since 2020, including coverage in a special edition.¹⁶⁷ Also, extremist individuals and parts of the Reichsbürger and Selbstverwalter scenes refer to QAnon. For example, the right-wing extremist Axel Schlimper said in a conversation with “Volkslehrer” (“people’s teacher”) Nikolai Nerling:

“The basis for seriously hurting children this way is the basis for all the satanism rampant in this world. Just as with circumcision, the background is that such an



Diffuse antisemitic narrative in a Telegram post of a QAnon channel. Accordingly, not “the Jew” is the mastermind behind the world conspiracy but “the Zionists”. However, this has to be considered an antisemitic statement, too.

164 Mainly in the US, several acts of violence and even murder have been committed in this context since 2017. In Germany, QAnon adherents among others things participated in what was called the “storming of the Reichstag” in August 2020.

165 This refers to the Saudi dynasty of rulers. Several conspiracy myths ascribe a Jewish origin to the family.

166 Qlobal-Change website.

167 See e.g.: “COMPACT-Magazin”, 08/2020, “Satan in Hollywood. Das dunkle Geheimnis der Reichen und Schönen” (“Satan in Hollywood. The dark secret of the rich and beautiful”); *ibid.*, 09/2020, “Querdenker. Stürzt die Freiheitsbewegung die Corona-Diktatur?” (“Querdenker. Will the freedom movement overthrow the coronavirus dictatorship?”); “COMPACT Spezial” no. 27: “Geheimakte Kinderschänder. Die Netzwerke des Bösen” (“Secret file child abusers. The networks of evil.”).

injury to a child's body provokes the release of a certain substance. This substance is called adrenochrome. Word has occasionally got out. It is a metabolic product of adrenaline, causing a very strong cell regeneration. This adrenochrome is consumed by several individuals, circles of individuals in order to advance their own cell regeneration. A kind of live-cell treatment. And, if this is a religious practice, it shows what kind of religion that is. It is Judaism and Islam."¹⁶⁸

With an enormous increase in followers because of the coronavirus pandemic, QAnon has now become a factor in the radical or even extremist spectrum that must not be underestimated. Ideologies delegitimising the state and glorifying violence are spread through QAnon as are narratives that are implicitly or explicitly antisemitic. Since right-wing extremist circles adapt and disseminate QAnon contents because of their compatibility, QAnon has not only the potential to radicalise its adherents according to its own worldview but can also open the door to right-wing extremist ideas.

To conclude, it has to be underlined that QAnon is not a homogeneous movement. It would be an undue simplification to categorise all QAnon adherents as hardened antisemites or even to allege that they all have concrete phantasies of subversion.

The QAnon scene is currently undergoing drastic change. The undisturbed inauguration of the 46th US president, Joe Biden, in spite of the Capitol assault in Washington D.C. on 6 January 2021, for example, unsettled and partly even disillusioned the scene. Moreover, the prophetic "Q" has not issued a single "drop" since December 2020. Whether this will lead to a long-term loss of significance or to a growing radicalisation is not yet foreseeable.

VII. Conclusion

Antisemitism is a linking factor for the German right-wing extremist scene, and its manifestations range from mere prejudice to factual murder.

Particularly neo-Nazis and violence-oriented right-wing extremists recur to antisemitic conspiracy theories suspecting that the criminal "masterminds" behind global elites are Jews who aspire to rule the world. Such obsessive antisemitic constructions can trigger an attack or murder, as was proven by the attack in Halle on 9 October 2019. The perpetrator's "manifesto" spread on the Internet revealed a worldview that was based on conspiracy theories and pervaded with antisemitic attitudes. The right-wing extremist attack in Hanau on 19 February 2020 showed that the Halle incident had not been an isolated act. Also in this case, underlying antisemitism marked the perpetrator's worldview.

For right-wing extremist parties, antisemitism is still a means of ideological identification and a wide field of agitation. Classic topics of such political parties, like "anti-asylum agi-

168 Video blog "Der Volkslehrer" ("The people's teacher") (16 March 2021).

tation” or an alleged “Islamification” of Germany, are still predominant but often justified with antisemitic arguments. The coronavirus pandemic and the accompanying criticism of governmental measures as well as the Middle East conflict have been recent developments enhancing the compatibility of antisemitic narratives. For strategic reasons, however, right-wing extremist parties and/or their members often prefer encoded antisemitism. Regarding the Middle East conflict, anti-Zionist antisemitism is often communicated very overtly.

An important role within the New Right, particularly in connection with the coronavirus pandemic, falls to the spreading of the “Great Reset” conspiracy theory with its antisemitic connotations. According to this theory, the pandemic was planned and staged by “the elites” in order to create a totalitarian system with the aim to restructure and triumph over national governments and to create a “New World Order”. In addition, the US entrepreneur and financial investor George Soros continues to be a target of antisemitic agitation. Overt antisemitism, however, is not among the fundamental ideological features of the New Right, which is rather characterised by a decided rejection of migration and Islam.

The great danger of right-wing extremists using the compatibility of antisemitic positions for their purposes has become apparent particularly in the context of the coronavirus pandemic and the related governmental measures. The pandemic has given right-wing extremists and antisemitic protagonists an opportunity to exploit protests staged by a very heterogeneous spectrum composed of Covid deniers, critics of governmental measures and anti-vaxxers in order to increase the reach and acceptance of their arguments.

Within the protest scene against governmental containment measures, (partly encoded) antisemitism in the form of conspiracy theories can be found. Antisemitic ideas, some of them centuries old, as for example the one of a secret (Jewish) elite controlling the world and striving to enslave the world population, have gained a new impetus from the pandemic and spread more widely. Moreover, secondary antisemitism has surfaced that trivialises the National Socialist persecution of Jews and the Holocaust by equating them with the governmental measures to contain the pandemic.

Internet platforms and social media play the most important role in spreading right-wing extremist antisemitism. Websites, blogs and vlogs of right-wing extremist influencers, online shops and uncountable forums, groups and social media channels offer their users almost unlimited opportunities to share antisemitic convictions. The anonymity and the easy and rapid ways of mostly unfiltered communication create an attractive and secure space for any kind of extremist ideas. In many cases, this exchange of thoughts on the Internet and social media leads to a radicalisation that often occurs undetected.

As a result, it can be said that antisemitic ideas and their different manifestations can be found in all types of right-wing extremism. Encoded, disguised in conspiracy narratives or overt and unmistakable: Antisemitism is a fundamental ideological feature of right-wing extremism.

The range is wide: There is overt racist antisemitism, for example in the violence-prone right-wing extremist scene and its music as well as on the Internet. But there is also political and secondary antisemitism, for example in the right-wing extremist parties and the New Right, often encoded and with references to conspiracy-theoretical narratives. In addition, not least the coronavirus-related developments have shown that antisemitic tendencies can also be found among individuals who, apart from this, cannot be considered right-wing extremists. This shows most clearly how compatible antisemitism is – a compatibility that makes the issue likely to remain virulent also in future.

D. Antisemitism in the field of Reichsbürger and Selbstverwalter

I. Introduction

The Reichsbürger and Selbstverwalter scene is characterised by attitudes and argumentation patterns that are in most cases difficult to comprehend, and in some cases include antisemitic ideologemes or views showing compatibility with antisemitic conspiracy theories.

Some groups advance antisemitic views, and firmly established antisemitic opinions can also be found with some individual members of the scene. They are usually expressed online and in social media contributions or by repeatedly sending messages with relevant content. Moreover, antisemitic attitudes promoted by conspiracy theories can be found that show a hidden antisemitism. The dislike of or hostility towards Jews is somewhat more obvious in the overlap of Reichsbürger and Selbstverwalter and the right-wing extremist Holocaust deniers.

All forms of antisemitism exist among Reichsbürger and Selbstverwalter, although anti-Zionist antisemitism seems to be less strong.

II. Antisemitic agitation

Given the heterogeneity of the scene, there is no form of antisemitism that would be typical of Reichsbürger and Selbstverwalter. In fact, they embrace common antisemitic positions and conspiracy theories. Repeated secondary-antisemitic statements insinuate that “the Jews” are holding a supposed position of control.

The antisemitic narrative of Jewish powers controlling the destiny of the world from behind the scenes by means of their financial potency is particularly spread. Conspiracy-theoretical views occurring in different variants, especially with reference to the Rothschild family and their alleged exertion of power, are sometimes connected to current political and sociopolitical developments.

The key protagonist of the Reichsbürger and Selbstverwalter group *Geeinte deutsche Völker und Stämme* (GdVuSt/United German Peoples and Tribes), banned for spreading antisemitic documents, said, for example, in a video interview in connection with the coronavirus pandemic:

“We know that, in the test kits, in the Q-tip tests and solutions, there are some kind of living creatures. We know that they have been built by Rothschild.”¹⁶⁹

“Yes, all those foundations with their presidents. No matter whether it is the Jewish Trump or the Jewish Putin or the Jewish Erdogan, they do not have a say at all. And Erdogan may force his people here as much as he wants to buy the houses and to never ever sell them back to Germans. And they may already have photographed all houses in Germany and posted them on Turkish real estate websites. It does not matter at all. They can never own anything here because they are all in an order, in a council of an order. Yes, a typically Ottoman order. [...] They are only presidents, we are humans. And this is why there is that right to be a human, which very few people have on this earth.”¹⁷⁰

In other videos, she argues that all “formats of belief” are Jewish organisations and that everything effective in these formats is only effective under martial law and only regarding soldiers, but never with regard to land. This explanation is followed by a picture of an antisemitic pamphlet insinuating that the Jews are planning to achieve world domination, and that one aim in this plan is to take over real estate. However, she alleges that Jews in Germany do not have a basis for receiving land.¹⁷¹

Other assertions are that German financial institutes are controlled by the Rothschild family because “*the DKB BANK, the Deutsche Bank, the KfW Bank are all actually Rothschild banks.*”¹⁷² In a video published in response to the aforementioned ban on the association, it is claimed, among other things, that there is a military campaign for world domination, derived from the Mosaic formats of belief.¹⁷³

Other reactions of the group regarding the ban also show antisemitic content:

“There is no doubt that patents and edicts like the Jewish edicts do not mean that the Jews belong and have a home here. All the more as the necessary conditions have not been met until these days. Baden and Prussian treaties offered the ‘hereditary-free’ citizens the self-government of Jewish communities only under the condition that they adapted to the country’s culture. Another condition in the Prussian patents and Jewish edicts was to refrain from changing their names. But neither the Rothschild family, nor Helmut Kohl or Angela Merkel have done so. Following

169 Video blog “FreeSpirit®-TV” (25 April 2021).

170 Ibid.

171 See YouTube (20 November 2020).

172 Ibid. (25 January 2021).

173 See *ibid.* (6 April 2020).

the example of the ruler of a naval power calling herself Queen Elisabeth Battenberg despite being born as Alexandra of York.”¹⁷⁴

“In the course of colonisation by the races of the sons of Jacob, who had been striving for world domination from the very beginning, the German Reich in all its functions always acted under trade law and was subject to the highest law, the rights of Germanic first settlement ensured by Ascanian sovereigns, also referred to as Citizens’ Provincial Rights. [...] We particularly point out that the creation of cemeteries and places of prayer, even on cleared grounds, cannot in any way constitute a right of home and that it is impossible for faith groups to create rights of ownership or determination this way. This goes especially for immigrated Mosaic formats of belief and order members.”¹⁷⁵

Moreover, searches carried out in connection with the ban imposed on the GdVuSt and its members produced antisemitic documents and drawings as well as documents denying the Holocaust (i.a. “Der erste Leuchter Report” (“The first Leuchter Report”)¹⁷⁶). The group also continues to spread messages with antisemitic content. For example, one of these messages, which is meant to announce an alleged “new municipality” and to transfer it to the control of the group, asserts a supposed rule of “Jacob’s sons”:

“We feel called upon, in a peaceful way, to recover the highest rule in the natural space of the territories and to free them from the power of Jacob’s sons as founders of the nations [...]”¹⁷⁷

The Reichsbürger and Selbstverwalter group Verfassunggebende Versammlung (VV / Constitutional Assembly) repeatedly expresses antisemitic positions, too. These views are usually spread via the website “ddb Netzwerk” or partly via the personal accounts of numerous members on social media, but not via the actual main website. One contribution headlined



“Warum gibt es überhaupt Krisen?” (“Why do crises exist at all?”), for example, associates the coronavirus with the discourse of an alleged “New World Order” (NWO) and insinuates that the protagonists of this “New World Order” exploit the pandemic in order to establish this long-planned NWO in Germany and all over the world. International – particularly Jewish – bankers, among them the Rothschild family, are indirectly defamed as its true initiators.¹⁷⁸

174 See “Öffentliche Anfrage in Bezug auf Raubüberfälle im Auftrag der Firma ‘BMI’” (“Public enquiry regarding robberies on the orders of the company ‘BMI’”). Message of the GdVuSt to the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI) of 26 March 2020.

175 “Erhebung Urheberrecht an Grund und Boden” (“Raising a claim to land”). Message of GdVuSt to BMI, 27 July 2020.

176 The “Leuchter Report” is an expert opinion denying the Holocaust that was written by the US national Fred Leuchter in 1988.

177 “Öffentliche Bekanntgabe der Erhebung von Freie Hansestadt Bremen” (“Public announcement of the registration of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen”). Message of GdVuSt to the Berlin Senate Chancellery, 6 March 2021.

178 See blog “ddb news” (23 March 2021).

The main representative of the Reichsbürger and Selbstverwalter group staatenlos.info comments on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in an antisemitic and conspiracy-theoretical way:



“Where do these weapons of war come from that are used to start the big war machinery so as to kill the poor people, the civilians, the Palestinians and of course also Israeli civilians [...] and seriously injure them and destroy them, and in the background, Rothschild slaps his thighs again [...]. And behind it all is, of course, Rothschild high finance.”¹⁷⁹

In a shared contribution of a known Reichsbürger and Selbstverwalter under the headline “*Wie funktioniert die Besatzung in Deutschland*” (“How does the occupation in Germany work”)¹⁸⁰, it says:

“All politicians, who of course never could be elected, they were employees of the private Israeli-Vatican company called Federal Republic of Germany, were unemployed.”

“Incidentally, these looting fellow citizens assume the task of occupying the German Reich on behalf of Israel and the Vatican. When ordinary Germans wake up one day and understand who is occupying them and who is looting and inflicting terror, then the mob will go berserk.”

Moreover, Helmut Kohl is disparaged in this contribution as “*the crypto Jew Henoeh Kohn*”.

In a “public announcement”, the group Bundesstaat Preußen (Slubice) (Federal State of Prussia – Slubice), which is part of the Reichsbürger and Selbstverwalter scene, makes overtly antisemitic statements and denies the Holocaust. In connection with the demand for a “*complete creation of the German Reich*” and the accompanying explanations, the author says:

“Jews were not killed in gas chambers. The story of Jews being exterminated by the Third Reich is a lie.”¹⁸¹

179 Telegram channel “Rüdigers Topinfos Offiziell” (16 May 2021).

180 A post spread via several Telegram channels.

181 Website “Bundesstaat Preußen” (4 June 2021).

III. Antisemitism-related criminal offences committed by Reichsbürger and Selbstverwalter

Antisemitic statements may fall under criminal law (particularly Section 130 of the German Criminal Code) and, if made by Reichsbürger or Selbstverwalter, often surface in the form of messages or texts that are spread online.

Such criminal proceedings are usually directed against individuals without an affiliation to an organisation. It has to be assumed that there is a considerable number of unreported cases.

Scene members having committed antisemitic offences can be divided into individuals with a firmly established antisemitic world view and individuals who use radical statements to express their emotions. Violent acts against Jews or Jewish institutions committed by Reichsbürger and Selbstverwalter have not been reported so far.

IV. Conclusion

On the whole, antisemitism is not a prominent element of the ideology of the Reichsbürger and Selbstverwalter scene, nor is it the focus of their agitation. However, right-wing extremist and conspiracy-theoretical constructs are compatible with antisemitic explanatory models. The narrative of a supposed Jewish conspiracy to control the world is strikingly often promoted by Reichsbürger and Selbstverwalter.

It can be assumed that scene members and groups deliberately keep a low profile as regards their antisemitic views so as to not be subject to governmental restrictions. The number of unreported antisemitic offences committed by Reichsbürger and Selbstverwalter is likely to be significantly higher than the number of reported cases of that kind.

The antisemitic statements of the scene that have recently come to notice, among others in the context of the coronavirus pandemic, correspond with already existing narratives so that they will probably continue to be spread also in other contexts, irrespectively of the pandemic.

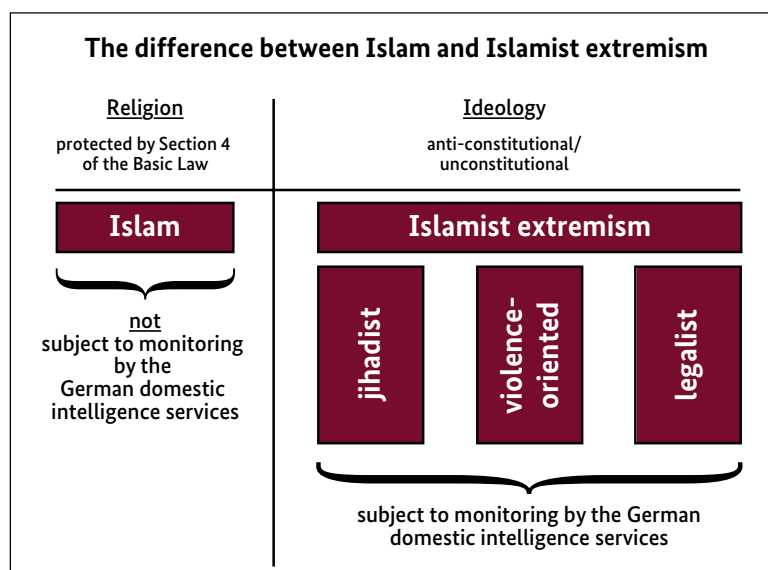
Despite being referred to in individual cases, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has attracted little attention among the Reichsbürger and Selbstverwalter, at least in public. The scene's primary focus is on its own interests. The main topic for scene members remains denying the legitimacy and sovereignty of the Federal Republic of Germany and rejecting its Basic Law and the existing legal order.

E. Antisemitism in Islamist extremism

I. General remarks on antisemitism in Islamist extremism

The term “Islam” designates a religion whose practice is protected by the German Basic Law and the freedom of religion guaranteed therein. “Islamist extremism”, by contrast, describes a form of political extremism. Referring to Islam, Islamist extremism aims at partly or fully abolishing the free democratic basic order of the Federal Republic of Germany. Islamist extremism is based on the conviction that Islam is not just a personal and private matter, but that it also governs or at least partly regulates social life and the political order. Islamist extremism postulates the existence of a divinely ordained – and therefore “true” and absolute – order that is above the orders made by man. Therefore, the aim pursued by all Islamist extremists is to establish this “divinely ordained order” not only in Arab and other Muslim countries, but also in Western states.

With their interpretation of Islam, Islamist extremists are in conflict with principles established in Germany’s Basic Law, in particular the sovereignty of the people, the separation of state and religion, freedom of expression and equal rights in general.



The generic term “Islamist extremism” comprises several tendencies and movements which differ, in some cases considerably, as to their ideological premises, their geographic orientation and their strategies and means. By exerting political and social influence, legalist tendencies such as the Millî Görüş movement try to impose an order they consider to be in conformity with Islam. They reject violence as a means to succeed with their demands. The followers of Islamist extremist terrorist groups such as HAMAS and Hezbollah, whose objective is the destruction of the State of Israel, are focused on their regions of origin, which is where they commit most of their terrorist acts of violence. In Western countries such as Germany, they try to garner support for their demands through their political and social commitment. Ji-

hadist groups like Islamic State (IS) and al-Qaeda, for example, consider terrorist violence used against “infidels” and supposedly corrupt regimes to be indispensable in their fight for a state system that is based on sharia. Their terrorist agenda is a global one and presents a threat to all countries around the world.

Antisemitic ideas can be found in almost all Islamist extremist tendencies and organisations; the only thing that varies is the way in which these groups present them in public.

1. Origin and development of Islamist extremist antisemitism

Islamic tradition tells of Prophet Muhammad’s attempts to convert three Jewish tribes to his faith. When his efforts failed, armed conflict broke out, ending in the military defeat of these tribes. These events provide the background to the passages in the Koran that are critical of Jews. The main accusation is that the Jews allegedly broke the covenant with Allah and the Muslims by not accepting Muhammad as the prophet chosen by God.

Nonetheless, Jews were able to live in relative safety in Islamic countries for many centuries, especially compared to Central Europe and its Christian traditions. Antisemitic clashes or pogroms were relatively rare. It was only in the mid-19th century that European antisemitism started to spread in the Islamic world as well.

Violent clashes between Jewish and Muslim groups increasingly occurred from the 1920s onwards, when large numbers of European Jews emigrated to Palestine, where they faced economic and political competition with the local Arab population. Antisemitic views were also on the rise in organised Islamist extremism from that time. The Mufti¹⁸² of Jerusalem, Mohammed Amin el-Husseini, for instance, maintained close contact with the German National Socialists, openly agitating against “the Jews” in speeches on the radio. Another example is the spreading, from the 1930s, of Arabic translations of European antisemitic writings among the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood (MB), where they were widely applauded.



Mohammed Amin al-Husseini together with Adolf Hitler in Berlin in 1941

The founding of the State of Israel in 1948 and the country’s military victory over the allied Arab states of Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq in the war of independence marked the peak of the conflict. In the course of the war, hundreds of thousands of Muslim Palestinians fled or were driven out of the country, which continues to strain relations between Israel and Palestine to this day. This military defeat caused an increase in antisemitic views among large parts of the population of the other Arab states too, which was a major factor in the emigra

182 A Mufti is an Islamic legal scholar who issues legal opinions on specific aspects of Islamic law (fatwas).

tion of almost 900,000 Jews from these countries.¹⁸³ The only possible explanation for the fact that this small and supposedly weak country had managed to defeat the allied states seemed



Title page of a German edition of the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion”, published by the Nazi Party’s central publishing house.

to be the construct of a “Jewish world conspiracy” as described in the antisemitic “Protocols of the Elders of Zion”. Initiated by the Egyptian government, the reprint of an Arabic translation of the “Protocols” finally resulted in their widespread distribution throughout the Arabic-speaking countries.

Published by Sayyid Qutb in 1950, the essay entitled “Our Struggle with the Jews” was an “ideological milestone” of Islamist extremist antisemitism. Qutb was born in Egypt and was considered one of the most important theoreticians of the Islamist extremist Muslim Brotherhood (MB) already in his lifetime. His essay took up European antisemitic stereotypes, the conspiracy theories laid down in the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion” and anti-Jewish quotations from the Koran to form a unit of thought. By adapting traditional

European antisemitism to the religious, social and cultural characteristics of the Arab world, Qutb created a new type of antisemitism: Islamist extremist antisemitism. Due to its European roots, Islamist extremist antisemitism continues to attract antisemites from various parts of society. One example of this is the partial cooperation between right-wing extremist and Islamist extremist Holocaust deniers.¹⁸⁴ The support left-wing extremist groups provide to HAMAS can also be seen in that light.¹⁸⁵

2. Antisemitic stereotypes in Islamist extremism

Islamist extremist antisemitism as developed by Qutb is a characteristic feature of almost all Islamist extremist organisations. This is why all Islamist extremist ideologies contain the same or at least similar statements about Jews. The core idea always is that in secret, Jews endeavour to obtain world domination or have already obtained it, thus controlling world politics and the world economy. Again, the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion” are the written basis of this theory of a worldwide conspiracy, which was also taken up by Qutb. Islamist extremists frequently refer to the following elements and motives:

183 Bensoussan, Georges: Die Juden der arabischen Welt. Die verbotene Frage (The Jews in the Arab world. The forbidden question), Leipzig 2019, p. 12. Regarding this topic see also Weinstock, Nathan: Der zerrissene Faden. Wie die arabische Welt ihre Juden verlor 1947-1967 (The broken thread. How the Arab world lost its Jews 1947-1967), Freiburg i. Br./Vienna 2019.

184 See Pfahl-Traughber, Armin: Das Verhältnis von Islamisten und Rechtsextremisten (On the relation between Islamist extremists and right-wing extremists), in: www.bpb.de, 28 November 2006.

185 As an example, see the pro-HAMAS articles published on the website “Antiimperialistisches Lager” (“Anti-Imperialist Camp”).

“The Jews” controlling the financial and economic systems

The supposed Jewish conspirators are said to deliberately cause economic crises and shortages of capital with the aim of making the rest of the world dependent on them. This assertion takes up the idea of the “greedy Jew”, which has existed since the Middle Ages, and transfers it to modern times.

“The Jews” stirring up wars and conflicts

According to the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion”, Jewish conspirators provoke wars and conflicts all over the world to play peoples and nations off against each other and to wear them down. This allegation can for instance be found in the HAMAS charter of 1988, which in article 22 accuses the Jews of having caused both World War I and II. Allegedly, their purported (and achieved) aim was to make money out of these wars and to use it to form the financial basis for their world domination:

“They [the Jews] were behind World War I, when they managed to destroy the Islamic Caliphate, making financial gains and obtaining control of many sources of wealth [...]. And they were behind World War II, through which they made huge financial gains by trading in armaments.”¹⁸⁶

“Jewish” activity supported by secret agents and organisations

Part of the Jewish efforts to dominate the world described in the “Protocols of the Elders of Zion” allegedly consists in causing conflicts and tensions in society through secret organisations and agents. This accusation too was taken up by numerous Islamist extremist organisations. They allege that Jews are the masterminds behind various states, associations and (political) movements such as the US, the UN, liberalism or the Freemasons. Consequently, a common strategy is to discredit political opponents by portraying them as allies or accomplices of the Jews. The third edition of the IS magazine “Dabiq”, for instance, showed former US President Barack Obama wearing a kippa.

The eternal struggle between Islam and Judaism

Both the Salafist and the jihadist spectrum are particularly prone to dividing the world into “believers” and “nonbelievers”. This worldview portrays Judaism as belonging to the “nonbelievers”, often even as leading them. Judaism’s supposed aim is to systematically fight and destroy Islam. This ideological attitude is mostly based on Qutb’s work, which describes the alleged worldwide conflict in drastic terms. Qutb in turn cited a Hadith¹⁸⁷ containing a pre-

186 Baumgarten, Helga: Der politische Islam in Palästina (Political Islam in Palestine), Munich 2006, p. 316f.

187 Hadith are the prophet’s statements and actions handed down over time that serve as binding examples to devout Muslims. Together with the instructions laid down in the Koran, they form the basis of a godly life.

diction of an apocalyptic battle between Judaism and Islam. This apocalyptic idea conveyed in the Hadith is frequently referred to in jihadist and other Islamist extremist texts and propaganda material.

3. Rejection of the State of Israel by Islamist extremist organisations

There are organisations within the Islamist extremist spectrum whose primary aim is to fight the very existence of the State of Israel. These include the Palestinian HAMAS and the Lebanese Hezbollah. Both organisations fight against Israel using military and terrorist means and frequently call for the complete destruction of Israel in their propaganda. One of their commonly used slogans of propaganda is: “Palestine will be free, from the river to the sea!” These words refer to the River Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea, thus denying the State of Israel its right to exist.



While other Islamist extremist groups do not consider the State of Israel their main enemy, they still have a very hostile attitude towards the country. As regards the Middle East conflict, they see it more as part of a general global conflict between Muslims and the rest of the world (believers – nonbelievers). A statement made by the Islamist terrorist Amedy Coulibaly, who killed several people in a kosher supermarket in Paris in January 2015, is a characteristic example of this. When asked why he had chosen that particular supermarket, he answered:

When asked why he had chosen that particular supermarket, he answered:

“The Jews! Because of their oppression, especially of Islamic State, but also anywhere else. It is for all areas where Muslims are being oppressed. Which includes Palestine!”¹⁸⁸

The vast majority of Islamist extremist organisations have in common that they hardly make any distinction between the State of Israel and the Jewish people – neither in terms of language nor in terms of content. They often transfer centuries-old antisemitic stereotypes to Israel. Again, a particularly widespread example in this context is the blood libel, which has its roots in the Christian Middle Ages. It accuses the Jews of baking unleavened flatbread (matzo) using the blood of Christian children during the preparations for the Passover festival. The motif of the “child-slaughtering Jews” became a central element of anti-Israel



188 As stated by the perpetrator in his telephone call with the TV station BFMTV, published on: Focus Online: Das sagte der Geiselnnehmer von Paris am Telefon (This is what the hostage taker of Paris said on the phone), in: focus.de, 10 January 2015.

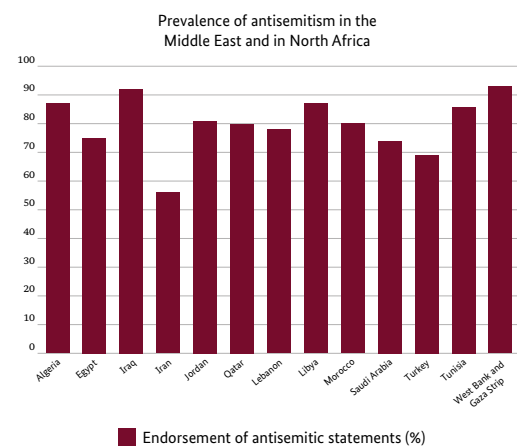
agitation after the 2014 Gaza war, which saw many civilians – including children – killed by Israeli attacks.

Both the slogan “Child murderer Israel” used in many demonstrations and the sometimes excessive display of dead children in anti-Israel propaganda material have to be seen that context.

4. Prevalence of Islamist extremist antisemitism

A worldwide survey conducted by the Anti-Defamation League¹⁸⁹ (ADL) has found that anti-semitic attitudes are most widely held in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA region), where almost three quarters of respondents – 74 per cent, to be exact – agreed with a majority of the antisemitic stereotypes presented to them. Non-MENA countries have an average index score of 23 per cent. Outside the MENA region, the average index scores are as follows:

- Eastern Europe: 34 per cent
- Western Europe: 24 per cent
- Sub-Sahara Africa: 23 per cent
- Asia: 22 per cent
- The Americas: 19 per cent
- Oceania: 14 per cent



Source: Worldwide survey conducted in 2013 and 2014 by the Anti-Defamation League, in: global100.adl.org (accessed on 11 January 2019).

The antisemitic ideas spread by Islamist extremist groups and individuals are a serious challenge to peaceful and tolerant coexistence in the Federal Republic of Germany. In order to obtain detailed information on the extent to which these ideas have spread, BfV, in late 2015, started compiling a list of antisemitic incidents with a suspected Islamist extremist background. These are incidents that can be considered to be associated with the Islamist extremist spectrum because of the related external circumstances (name and/or origin of the actors, content posted by groups on social media, etc.). In this context, an antisemitic incident is defined as any incident directed against Jews as such and/or against the Jewish community as such, regardless of whether such a community is organised within or outside the State of Israel. Anti-Zionism is seen as a subcategory of antisemitism that is often used as a pretext in order to avoid the specific condemnation of antisemitism in Germany and the associated (penal) sanctions.

One of the prerequisites for entering an incident in the list is that it must have caused harm to people and/or their property and/or institutions clearly belonging to the Jewish religious

¹⁸⁹ The ADL is a US Jewish organisation headquartered in New York which is committed to fighting discrimination and defamation. The organisation's main activity is combating antisemitism.

community or that it must have caused harm to the State of Israel, which is conceived as a Jewish collectivity in this context. Another condition is that the originator of the incident must at least be suspected of having Islamist extremist views – for example through membership of an Islamist extremist organisation or through an open demonstration of sympathy for it – and that this must have been a decisive factor in causing the incident.

The list currently comprises more than 1,100 antisemitic incidents from the period between February 2012 and October 2021.¹⁹⁰ The recorded incidents range from anti-Israeli banners at demonstrations through antisemitic sermons in mosques to verbal and physical attacks on people of Jewish faith.

More than half of all registered incidents, however, are antisemitic posts on the Internet, especially on social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp or Telegram, thus constituting the largest share by far. Antisemitic incidents involving traditional distribution channels such as print media, sermons and public speeches are much less common. Although Islamist extremist organisations still use such channels to spread their antisemitic ideas, they make up only 20 per cent of all registered incidents. Around 13 per cent of all incidents are oral remarks made in private. Taking into account that at least some of the antisemitic graffiti and posts on social networks also come from private individuals without a connection to Islamist extremist organisations, it becomes apparent that everyday antisemitism is even more widespread than that.

The number of physical attacks against Jews registered so far has been small.¹⁹¹ However, these few isolated cases already show that the ideological radicalisation and the incitement to hatred and violence fuelled by antisemitic ideas can actually trigger violent escalations, some of which may have significant consequences for the victims, even if the perpetrators are neither members nor followers of Islamist extremist organisations. This particularly applies to individuals socialised in the Arab world in milieus in which antisemitic views continue to be a common phenomenon.¹⁹² An example of this are several incidents that occurred in May 2021, presumably in connection with the escalation of the Middle East conflict.

190 It is important to consider, however, that the list was only started in the third quarter of 2015 and initialised throughout Germany in the fourth quarter of that year. The recording of the incidents that happened before mid-2015 was therefore done in retrospect and only insofar as it was possible to identify these past occurrences without extra effort. This is why, for the period between February 2012 and September 2015 (44 months), only 125 incidents were recorded. Moreover, as regards the period from March 2020, the restrictions on public life to contain the pandemic have to be taken into account.

191 Physical attacks also include acts that do not cause physical injuries, such as spitting at people.

192 In the Near and Middle East and in North Africa, antisemitic views are prevalent among around 75 to 90 per cent of the total population. See: Deutscher Bundestag, Drucksache 18/11970, Bericht des Unabhängigen Expertenkreises Antisemitismus (Printed Paper 18/11970, Report of the Independent Expert Group on Antisemitism), 7 April 2017, p. 91ff.

Almost 70 per cent of all reported incidents were linked with Islamist extremist organisations. This includes numerous supraregional organisations (e.g. organisations belonging to the Millî Görüş movement [MGB]; MB, HAMAS, Hezbollah, IS etc.), but also local or regional mosques and cultural associations.

At the same time, for almost 30 per cent of all incidents, there was no proof of a direct link between the actors and Islamist extremist organisations. These non-organised Muslim individuals may be a gauge of how far antisemitic ideas have spread beyond Islamist extremist organisations and/or of the extent to which, based on the propaganda of such organisations, these ideas have developed a momentum of their own. In any case, these incidents are indicative of a Muslim everyday antisemitism that is common in Germany.

Regarding the list of incidents, it must be noted that it contains only those incidents that come to the attention of the German domestic intelligence services in the course of their work. There is no systematic search for such incidents. Likewise, police information is only included in the list if the German domestic intelligence services receive such information in connection with their work. It therefore seems likely that the overall number of incidents is actually much higher and that the list represents only the “tip of the iceberg”.¹⁹³

To give an impression of the intensity and range of Islamist extremist antisemitism in Germany, some of the incidents from BfV’s list are described below.

28 April 2019: An unknown perpetrator verbally insulted two people on a tram in Potsdam because of their Jewish faith. One of the victims was wearing a kippa and a conspicuous signet ring with an engraved Star of David. The perpetrator said “*Jews are no human beings*”, adding that whoever kills a Jew does not commit a sin but will go to paradise. The perpetrator was obviously of Arab origin and spoke Arabic.

22 June 2019: In Augsburg six young migrants first insulted a cyclist as “Jewish pig”, and then one of them pushed him from his bike. They called him “kafir” (unbeliever) and asked him whether he was a “Jewish pig”.

27 July 2019: In Potsdam a 19-year-old Syrian spat at a 25-year-old German who was wearing a kippa and insulted him by calling him a “dirty Jew”.

13 August 2019: In Berlin a 55-year-old who was walking on the pavement and whose dress showed him to be of Jewish faith was kicked in the back by an Arabic-speaking individual so that he fell.

¹⁹³ The accuracy of this assumption is supported by, among others, a study of the forms and ideological backgrounds of antisemitic agitation on social networks, for which the domestic intelligence service of the federal state of Hesse analysed the posts relating to 38 articles and videos dating from between 2010 and 2016 on the topics of Jews/Judaism, Israel/Middle East conflict and antisemitism. Of 600 comments containing antisemitic ideas, more than 200 were classified as having a potentially Islamist extremist or at least a Muslim background. None of the more than 100 posts dating from 2013 or later is included in BfV’s list of incidents. See Landesamt für Verfassungsschutz Hessen: ... und die Gerüchte stammen nicht von irgendwelchen Nazis! (... and the rumours do not come from some old Nazis!), Wiesbaden 2017.

05 November 2019: In a fitness centre in Freiburg a (Muslim) individual pulled the kippa from the victim's head, spat into it and threw it into the rubbish bin in the changing room. Moreover, the individual reportedly called the victim "dirty Jew" several times and also repeated "Free Palestine".

6 January 2020: During a police search in Schwerin a Syrian held a bottle of lighter gas in front of the face of one of the officers and said: "*Here's the gas. To gas the Jews.*"

3 August 2020: An Instagram user posted an image of soldiers lowering a coffin with an Israeli flag into a grave. The image contained the text: "*Oh Allah, list them all, kill them one by one and do not leave any one of them out!*"

26 October 2020: In a video published on a YouTube channel, a Salafist preacher talked about a Hadith on Judaism. The Salafist preacher explained that the time would come as well as "true" Muslims who would follow the call of the trees and stones and carry out the command to kill the Jews.

11 May 2021: In connection with the escalation of the Middle East conflict, a group of individuals assembled in front of a synagogue in Bonn and burnt an Israeli flag. Afterwards, the perpetrators threw stones at the synagogue, damaging window panes of the entrance area.

12 May 2021: In connection with the escalation of the Middle East conflict, about 180 individuals assembled in Gelsenkirchen, without having applied for authorisation for that rally, and moved towards the synagogue. They chanted several slogans, among others "*Bloody Jews, bloody Jews, bloody Jews*". Before they reached the synagogue, the police stopped them.

15 May 2021: In connection with the escalation of the Middle East conflict, demonstrations and rallies took place in several German cities; participants shouted anti-Israeli slogans and displayed or carried banners with anti-Israeli texts. After a rally in Mannheim, participants burnt an Israeli flag. During a demonstration of pro-Palestinian groups in Berlin-Neukölln with about 3,500 participants, slogans like "*Bomb Tel Aviv*" and "*Child murderer Israel*" were shouted. Handmade banners contained slogans like "*Zionism=Terrorism*" and "*Israel does not exist*". Journalists on site were insulted and objects were thrown at them. One journalist belonging to an Israeli TV station had a firecracker thrown at her while on camera.

19 May 2021: After a pro-Palestinian demonstration in Berlin-Mitte in connection with the escalation of the Middle East conflict, a press representative of Jüdisches Forum für Demokratie und gegen Antisemitismus e. V. (Jewish Forum for Democracy and against Antisemitism regd. assoc.) sustained bodily injuries when a 19-year-old participant of that demonstration hit him on the arm with a flag.

20 May 2021: People who had participated in a demonstration called “Solidarity with Israel – Against any form of antisemitism” in Berlin were verbally attacked by a group of individuals not far from the place where the demonstration had been held; the individuals shouted the words “*We are Hamas. All Jews must be murdered. You should all be killed! It’s our country, Israel get out!*” Moreover, the individuals took away an Israeli flag made of paper that belonged to one of the participants of the demonstration, tore it to pieces and threw them into a rubbish bin. They spat at another person.

26 May 2021: In Magdeburg a group of young men, presumably of Arab origin, attacked a 22-year-old Jew. One man pulled the kippa from the victim’s head and hit him in the face several times.

5. Response to the escalation of the Middle East conflict in May 2021

The escalation of the Middle East conflict in May 2021 led to a large number of pro-Palestinian and/or anti-Israeli rallies and demonstrations in Germany. More than 130 demonstrations took place in all of Germany. A total of 43,000 individuals, the vast majority of them from the Muslim population, participated in them. The initiators of those gatherings did not belong to just one organisation. Various interest groups and individuals had called for the demonstrations.

The mood at the gatherings was emotional and often aggressive. Anti-Israeli slogans were determined at almost all of them, as well as sporadic antisemitic ones; the slogans were chanted and displayed on banners. The slogan “Child murderer Israel”¹⁹⁴ was used often. Moreover, there were the shouts “*Oh, Qassam, oh darling, destroy Tel Aviv!*”¹⁹⁵ and “*Bomb Tel Aviv!*”¹⁹⁶ as well as the insult “bloody Jews”.

In individual cases, participants declared their solidarity with HAMAS by displaying its flag. At one demonstration, there was a little girl wearing a headband with the symbol of the al-Qassam Brigades, a military sub-organisation of HAMAS.

Another common occurrence was the use of the term “apartheid state” for the State of Israel as well as the mention of a “genocide”¹⁹⁷ committed by the State of Israel. Moreover, participants chanted the slogan “*Palestine will be free, from the river to the sea*”. This sentence generally signals the demand for a complete dissolution of the State of Israel.

194 “Im Hass vereint” (“United in hatred”), Süddeutsche Zeitung of 15 March 2021, p. 2; “Tel Aviv bombardieren, brüllen Juden-Hasser” (“Jew haters yell ‘Bomb Tel Aviv’”), Bild am Sonntag of 16 May 2021, p. 4; “Ausschreitungen bei pro-palästinensischer Demo in Neukölln” (“Clashes during pro-Palestinian demonstration in Neukölln”), Tagesspiegel Sonntag of 16 May 2021, p. 7; “Nahostkonflikt schwappt herüber” (“Middle East conflict spills over”), Neues Deutschland of 17 May 2021, p. 3.

195 “Oh Qassam, oh Liebling – zerstör Tel Aviv!” (“Oh, Qassam, oh darling – destroy Tel Aviv!”), Die Tageszeitung of 17 May 2021, p. 6.

196 “Tel Aviv bombardieren, brüllen Juden-Hasser” (“Jew haters yell ‘Bomb Tel Aviv’”), Bild am Sonntag of 16 May 2021, p. 4.

197 “Aggressiv gegen Israel und Juden” (“Aggressive against Israel and Jews”), Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung of 17 May 2021, p. 2; “Oh Qassam, oh Liebling – zerstör Tel Aviv!” (“Oh, Qassam, oh darling – destroy Tel Aviv!”), Die Tageszeitung of 17 May 2021, p. 6.

The vast majority of the gatherings passed off without violence. The exceptions were the two demonstrations with the largest number of participants – 3,500 and 3,000 respectively – that took place in Berlin-Neukölln on 15 May 2021 and in Berlin-Mitte on 19 May 2021 as well as events in Mannheim, Stuttgart and Oldenburg, during which several police officers were injured. During these demonstrations, the police on site were faced with many cases of physical resistance, with stones deliberately thrown at them and with pepper spray and firecrackers used against them. At the demonstration in Berlin-Neukölln on 15 May, journalists who were there were insulted and had objects thrown at them.

Outside the organised gatherings, too, there were quite a few cases of theft and quite a number of Israeli flags were destroyed; moreover, there were numerous other anti-Israeli and/or anti-Jewish actions, including offences of bodily harm, as well as attacks on synagogues and on memorials of destroyed synagogues.

The ceasefire agreed on by Israel and HAMAS and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) in force since 21 May 2021 and respected by both sides has calmed the situation in Germany as well, especially regarding the protests.

The demonstrations have illustrated that the Middle East conflict is still a means of mobilising a large spectrum of individuals from the Muslim population. A unifying element is the feeling of solidarity with the Palestinian population in Israel and in the Palestinian territories.

The antisemitic incidents that the German domestic intelligence services have learnt of since May 2021 show a sharp rise in the number of incidents during the period in which the conflict worsened and reveal that political events can cause an increase in anti-Israeli and antisemitic rhetoric. This goes along with an intensification and aggravation of individual actions; an increased readiness to use violence against persons and objects was detected. Currently, there is however no intelligence suggesting that the conflict may have led to a permanent rise in anti-Israeli and antisemitic activities.

The events moreover show that some of the Muslim population have antisemitic attitudes even if they do not belong to Islamist extremist organisations. Incidents that make emotions run high, especially an escalation of the Middle East conflict, can trigger (public) antisemitic statements and even violent attacks.

II. Antisemitism in Islamist extremist organisations and movements

A description of Islamist extremist organisations and movements active in Germany can be found below, including concrete examples illustrating how their antisemitism is displayed in Germany.

Muslim Brotherhood (MB)

In May 2017 MB's official leadership published a press release stating that active resistance against Israel and support for HAMAS were justified until *"the entire Islamic land has been liberated from the Zionist occupying forces"*.¹⁹⁸



Born in Egypt in 1926, Yusuf Abdallah al-Qaradawi has been considered one of MB's most influential thinkers for decades.¹⁹⁹ Through his sermons and his television programme *"Sharia and Life"* broadcast on Al Jazeera, al-Qaradawi is able to reach an audience of millions, including in Europe. He has an uncompromisingly hostile attitude towards the State of Israel and expresses antisemitic opinions. One example of this is the following statement aired on the channel Al Jazeera, which can be received in Germany too:

*"Throughout history, Allah has punished the Jewish people for its depravity. The last punishment was carried out by Hitler. Through all these things – even when they exaggerated that matter – he succeeded in putting them in their place. This was divine punishment for them. Allah willing, the next time will be at the hand of the believers."*²⁰⁰

Furthermore, al-Qaradawi called Jewish people *"enemies of Allah and of Islam"* and *"treacherous aggressors"*; in a prayer during a sermon broadcast on Al Jazeera, he demanded the annihilation of the Jewish people: *"Oh Allah, take this oppressive Jewish Zionist gang. Oh Allah, do not spare a single one of them. Count them and kill them, down to the very last one."*²⁰¹

198 Website of the Muslim Brotherhood (8 May 2017).

199 Regarding al-Qaradawi and his interpretation of Islam, see Akademie für Verfassungsschutz (ed.): Yusuf al-Qaradawi und das Konzept der Wasatiya (Yusuf al-Qaradawi and the concept of wasatiya), in: verfassungsschutz.de, June 2015. Regarding al-Qaradawi's connection to the Muslim Brotherhood see *ibid.*, p. 25ff. See also: Johnson, Ian: Islamic Justice Finds a Foothold In Heart of Europe, Wall Street Journal, 4 August 2005.

200 "Reger Zulauf für Fundamentalisten" ("Fundamentalists very popular"), in: wienerzeitung.at, 7 May 2009.

201 Middle East Media Research Institute: Sheik Yousuf Al-Qaradhawi Incites against Jews, Arab Regimes, and the U.S., and Calls on Muslims to Boycott Starbucks, Marks and Spencer, in: memri.org, 9 January 2009.

In July 2020 a text by Ma'moun al-Hudaiby²⁰² was published on MB's official website in which he stated that resistance against the American or Zionist occupation was

*“in the view of the Arab and Islamic peoples, legitimate and obligatory jihad, whose practice and support in any possible way and with all means is a duty and which will be rewarded by Allah, either with victory on earth or death [for Allah] and paradise in the afterlife!!”*²⁰³

In Germany the Deutsche Muslimische Gemeinschaft (DMG / German Muslim Community; formerly called the Islamische Gemeinschaft in Deutschland / IGD) is considered the central and most important organisation of MB followers. One of its major goals is to present itself as a respectable, moderate contact for politicians, authorities and social associations in Germany. In order not to jeopardise this goal, antisemitic statements are avoided at official level.

HAMAS

HAMAS,²⁰⁴ which sees itself as the Palestinian arm of the Muslim Brotherhood, has the aim of establishing a Palestinian Islamic state stretching from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River. This would spell the end of the State of Israel. HAMAS does not only act politically, but also carries out violent actions against Israeli institutions. Its argumentation combines religious, national and territorial motives.



The antisemitic attitude of HAMAS can already be inferred from its founding charter, which includes statements such as the following:

*“In their Nazi treatment, the Jews made no exception for women or children. Their policy of striking fear in the heart is meant for all. They attack people where their breadwinning is concerned, extorting their money and threatening their honour.”*²⁰⁵

The charter also claims that “the Jews” endeavour to control the international media, founding “secret societies [...] in different parts of the world for the purpose of sabotaging societies and achieving Zionist interests.”²⁰⁶ The “Protocols of the Elders of Zion” are cited as irrefutable proof of the alleged Jewish infamy:

“The Zionist plan is limitless. After Palestine, the Zionists aspire to expand from the Nile to the Euphrates. When they will have digested the region they overtook, they will aspire to further expansion, and so on. Their plan is embodied in the ‘Protocols

202 Al-Hudaiby is a former “murshid”, a spiritual leader, of MB.

203 Website of the Muslim Brotherhood (9 July 2020).

204 Hamas: Arabic for “zeal”, “fighting spirit”; it is also the acronym for “Harakat al-muqawama al-islamiyya”, which means “Islamic resistance movement”.

205 Article 20 of the HAMAS charter, accessed on https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp (25 August 2020). The clearly antisemitic orientation of the text is also reflected in the fact that its authors deliberately employ the term “Jews” instead of the possible alternatives “Israelis” or “Zionists”.

206 Ibid., article 22.

of the Elders of Zion’, and their present conduct is the best proof of what we are saying.”²⁰⁷

Massive antisemitic propaganda is spread by the HAMAS-controlled television channel Al-Aqsa TV, which broadcasts from Gaza. It was on this channel – which can be received in Europe too – that Rajaa al-Halabi, chairwoman of the HAMAS women’s movement, announced on 5 February 2020 that they would yet have the chance to “stand on the threshold of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and to walk all over the Jews with [their] feet”.²⁰⁸ In a sermon broadcast by Al-Aqsa TV on 28 June 2019, the preacher said that “Zionists” deliberately ordered women to seduce Arab men in order to infect them with Aids.²⁰⁹

The “new” HAMAS charter published in February 2017, while refraining from the traditional forms of antisemitic propaganda found in the original charter, contains paragraphs with a clearly anti-Israeli stance. It also continues to call for violence. In Germany HAMAS has not perpetrated any acts of violence so far. The organisation mainly endeavours to attract new followers among Germany’s population of Palestinian origin and to collect donations. However, it also engages in spreading its antisemitic and anti-Israeli ideas in Germany.

The followers of HAMAS continue to use the Internet and social media or demonstrations to spread antisemitic content. In May 2021, for example, a Facebook user associated with HAMAS shared an image in which the entire map of Israel and Palestine is shown in the colours of the Palestinian flag. The image was captioned “They go and we remain”.

At a demonstration co-organised by followers and sympathisers of HAMAS in Germany in May 2021, slogans like “Child murderer Israel” were chanted.

207 Ibid., article 32.

208 See Middle East Media Research Institute: Head of Hamas Women’s Movement Rajaa Al-Halabi: Trump, You Lunatic, You Idiot ... We Will Liberate Palestine and Walk All Over the Jews with Our Pure Feet, in: www.memri.org, 5 February 2020.

209 See Middle East Media Research Institute: Hamas MP Marwan Abu Ras: The Zionists Send Girls to Sleep with Arabs and Give Them AIDS, in: memri.org, 28 June 2019.

Hezbollah

The Shia Hezbollah (“Party of God”) leads a violent struggle against Israel, also conducted with terrorist means. Inspired by the ideological and religious model of Iran, the organisation at the same time promoted the “Islamic Revolution” and the worldwide spreading of Islam.



Similar to HAMAS, Hezbollah also uses antisemitic statements – in the sense of hatred against all Jews – to support its line of argument against Israel. Referring to the Koran, Jews are frequently described as devious and dangerous enemies of Islam. The content of the Arabic-language pro-Hezbollah TV station al-Manar²¹⁰ TV, which openly calls for the destruction of the State of Israel, is a particularly clear example of this. The public broadcasting of this station is banned in France, Germany and the US.

However, since al-Manar TV is broadcast via an Egyptian satellite and via the Internet, its antisemitic content can still be viewed on private television sets.

During the annual demonstrations on al-Quds Day,²¹¹ in which participate, among others, Hezbollah activists and circles sympathising with the organisation, antisemitic incidents occur on a regular basis.

Hezbollah tends to spread antisemitic ideas on social media. Particularly, various speeches with strong antisemitic content delivered by Hezbollah’s secretary general Hassan Nasrallah can be found on the Internet. One of those speeches was shared as a video entitled “Write with blood, death to Israel” in December 2017. In May 2018 a video was posted on Facebook in which several individuals on a bus, who are on their way to a demonstration taking place in Berlin on the occasion of al-Quds Day, are singing an Arabic song saying: “*You Jewish rats, we will return to avenge ourselves.*”

On 26 March 2020 the Federal Ministry of the Interior imposed a ban on Hezbollah’s activities in Germany. The banning order established that Hezbollah’s activities contravene the criminal laws and are directed against the concept of international understanding. Hezbollah calls into question Israel’s right to exist and calls for its violent elimination. It is now prohibited to use symbols of Hezbollah in public, in an assembly or in print, audio or visual media, pictures

210 “The lighthouse”.

211 Since 1979 al-Quds Day has taken place every year on the last Friday of Ramadan, the Islamic month of fasting. Initiated by the leader of the Iranian Revolution Ayatollah Khomeini, its purpose is to remind all Muslims of their moral obligation to liberate Jerusalem (Arabic: al-Quds) from the “Zionist occupying forces”. In Germany a central demonstration with several hundreds of participants is held in Berlin on al-Quds Day every year. In 2020 and 2021 the demonstrations on the occasion of al-Quds Day were cancelled due to the pandemic.

or portrayals that are or are meant to be disseminated. The ban also concerns the displaying Hezbollah's flag.

Hizb ut-Tahrir (HuT)

Before being banned in 2003, HuT used leaflets, a magazine of its own and the Internet to promote antisemitic views in Germany and to call for the destruction of Israel. Its propaganda called the State of Israel “*a crime against humanity*”²¹² that had to be wiped out. Jews were referred to as “*the lowest part of God's creation on earth*”.²¹³



HuT attracted attention through an event with the title “Iraq – A new war and its consequences” held on the premises of Technische Universität Berlin on 27 October 2002. In addition to an audience of around 350 people, mostly students, the then chairman of the right-wing extremist political party NPD Udo Voigt and the then NPD lawyer and convicted Holocaust denier Horst Mahler attended the event.

The individuals associated with HuT currently pursue their activities underground and especially via social media. They strive to spread HuT's radical ideology and its antisemitic ideas among young people, not least among the refugees who have come to Germany.

A post by the organisation Generation Islam, which is close to HuT's ideology, was commented as follows by a Facebook user in January 2017: “*Israel, a cancerous ulcer that must be removed by force.*”

During a demonstration by the movement Muslim Interaktiv (Muslim Interactive), which is close to HuT's ideology, in Hamburg in May 2021, participants chanted slogans like “*Then victim, today perpetrator*”, “*Israel is the terrorist*” and “*Child murderer Israel*”.

Millî Görüş movement

Several independent organisations are considered to be part of the Millî Görüş movement. This movement strives to achieve its aims without violence. From the start, however, antisemitic statements were a core element of the Millî Görüş ideology founded by Necmettin Erbakan. One of Erbakan's texts, “The Just Economic System”, already supported the thesis of “Zionists” controlling “imperialism”, exploiting all mankind with the help of the capitalist concept of interest.²¹⁴

212 HuT: 50 Jahre – Happy Birthday Israel (50 years – Happy birthday Israel), Explizit, no. 5, April/June 1998.

213 Leaflet entitled “Offener Brief der HuT an die arabischen Herrscher, die am Gipfelkongress in Kairo teilnehmen” (“Open letter of HuT to the Arab rulers attending the summit in Cairo”) dated 19 October 2000.

214 See Erbakan, Necmettin: Gerechte Wirtschaftsordnung (The Just Economic System) (German edition), Ankara 1991.

More antisemitic remarks can be found, up to present times, in printed material associated with the Millî Görüş movement, especially in the daily paper “Millî Gazete”, whose antisemitic self-concept can be seen, for example, in a column published in February 2020. As regards the role of Russia and of the US in the conflict in Syria, it referred to a quotation by Erbakan:

“The brute oppressing and exploiting the world has Zionism as its brain, the Europe of the crusaders as its heart, the US as its right arm and Russia as its left arm.”²¹⁵

Salafism

In the German Salafist scene too, the Jewish population and/or the State of Israel rank among the principal enemies. This is particularly evident on the Internet, which Salafists use to spread antisemitic propaganda on websites, Facebook profiles and WhatsApp groups. One example of this is the association Islamische Audios (Islamic Audio Files), which the Federal Ministry of the Interior banned in 2013; this association had used the Internet to publish numerous pictures and statements such as *“Nazi & Israel: same shit, different asshole”*.

Another example is a Salafist group’s post of a picture showing Adolf Hitler and the text *“There will be a time when you will swear at me for every Jew who is alive because I did not have all of them wiped out”*.

In public, preachers of political Salafism pretend to be moderate and usually avoid making any antisemitic remarks. Nevertheless, there are exceptions to this rule time and again. For instance, during his Friday sermon on the topic of Jerusalem, a Salafist imam expressed a demand to the effect that *“the Arab governments have to act; if need be, Jerusalem has to be taken back by force.”* In another Friday sermon, the imam praised *“the women who have the courage to attack the Jews with knives.”*

215 “Milli Gazete” of 26 February 2020, p. 10.

Islamic State (IS)

This organisation strives to destroy the State of Israel and the entire Jewish people, a goal regularly expressed in its propaganda. The second edition of the ISIL magazine “Dabiq”, for instance, states as follows:



“It is only a matter of time before it [IS] will reach Palestine to fight the barbaric Jews and to kill those of them who hide behind the ‘Gharqad’ trees, the trees of the Jews.”

When IS reinforced its positions on the Sinai Peninsula in 2016, a series of propaganda videos presented this as a step towards the “liberation of Jerusalem”. The enemy images of “Israel” and the “Jews” are inextricably linked, and jihadist groups consider them particularly suitable for mobilising their followers. Therefore, these ideas have been continuously present in jihadist propaganda.

In June 2018 a grouping associated with IS published a video in Arabic calling for the fight against all enemies of IS, including the US, the Jews, Shias and laics, whose behaviour they compare with metastases. The video stated that IS was fighting these metastases by “cutting their heads off and spilling their dirty blood without mercy”.

III. Conclusion

The enemy image of “the Jews” is a major common denominator in the ideologies of all Islamist extremist groups. Islamist extremists follow the anti-Jewish traditions of Islam, but the antisemitic narrative in Islamist extremism can also be traced back to European sources and, not least, to National Socialism. For instance, the blood libel, which claims that children’s blood is required to bake matzo bread for the Jewish Passover festival, has its roots in the Christian Middle Ages, but is taken up in Islamist extremist circles to this day. As in the case of Hezbollah’s television channel, it has even found its way back to Europe.

Antisemitism in the context of Islamist extremism takes various shapes. Except for its racist form, virtually all of its varieties are present and overlap. Referring to religious sources such as the Koran, Islamist extremists often regard Jews as murderers of their own prophets and thus as rebels against God; consequently, fighting them is to be seen as a divine order. In keeping with social antisemitism, Jews are also frequently viewed as major actors of international finance. A political interpretation of profound impact in this context is the one alleging that international Jewish conspiracies target the Islamic world in particular. In this connection, the anti-Zionist idea of a “war of extermination” fought by the State of Israel against the Palestinian population is considered the consensus among large sections of Arab Islamic socie-

ties, reaching far beyond Islamist extremist circles. In individual cases, this antisemitic hatred may well develop exterminatory tendencies.

The whole range of such antisemitic ideas present among the population of countries in the Near and Middle East finds its way to Germany through various modern communication channels and, to a considerable degree, also through relevant TV stations. This is not only true for TV stations with direct links to extremist organisations, such as the one al-Manar has to Hezbollah, but also for those that provide a forum for preachers such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who is keen to convey the impression of being moderate.

The example of al-Qaradawi may also serve to illustrate the dual strategy pursued by parts of the Islamist extremist spectrum in exporting key elements of their ideology – like antisemitism – to Europe. Despite presenting themselves as representatives of a moderate middle course (“wasatiya”), they make formats such as the television series “Sharia and Life” with its Islamist extremist and antisemitic content available to the Arabic-speaking population in Europe and Germany. At the same time, they try to recommend themselves as a legal authority to the Muslims living here. Many Muslims have questions relating to daily life, such as their relations with Jews, Christians and atheists, to which they seek answers that are in conformity with Islam. They receive these answers through legal opinions (fatwas) issued by scholarly authorities. If forums influenced by Islamist extremism such as the European Council for Fatwa and Research succeeded in acquiring such authority, this could place a heavy burden on the coexistence of people of different religious affiliations.

Such insights especially gain in importance against the background of the increasing arrival of Muslims in Germany over the last few years. A great many of them have come from countries where antisemitic views have for many decades been common and have even been propagated by their governments. The latent or manifest antisemitic stereotypes conveyed to them during socialisation in their home countries seem familiar to those who become subject to Islamist extremist recruiting efforts, which may make it more likely that they will also accept other parts of Islamist extremist ideology.

The antisemitic incidents of May 2021 show that an escalation of the Middle East conflict in particular may lead to emotions running very high among the Muslim population also in Germany and even to violent attacks. During the vast majority of demonstrations, antisemitic and anti-Israeli statements and actions were determined. Most of the individuals who presumably committed criminal offences were part of the Muslim population but had no links with any organisations. This suggests that antisemitic ideas are common among members of the Muslim population and considered socially acceptable by them, regardless of whether they have decidedly extremist views.

F. Antisemitism in the field of foreign extremism

I. General remarks on antisemitism in the field of foreign extremism

Ülkücü adherents (Turkish right-wing extremists)

Antisemitism is a core element of Turkish right-wing extremist ideology. This ideology is characterised by an idealisation of Turkishness and, at the same time, by a denigration of other nations, ethnic groups and religions. Hostility towards Jews has been of particular significance in this context for a long time. Some enemy images result from (partly historical) territorial rivalry (e.g. with the Armenian population), others are rooted in ideology (e.g. the US as the embodiment of “the West”). The antisemitism of the Ülkücü adherents is based on mostly irrational ideas, religious misinterpretations, conspiracy theories that contradict facts and imputations of inferiority derived from biologism. The founding of the State of Israel added a marked hostility towards Israel which has expressed itself in their taking the side of the Palestinian population in a biased way.

Secular extremist Palestinians

The main point of reference for the antisemitic agitation of secular extremist Palestinians is the State of Israel as their territorial rival, usually equated with “the Jews”. Jews are at best allowed to coexist in an aspired state of “Palestine” – a calculated concession that is only made with the intention of turning them into an insignificant minority besides the Palestinian Muslim Arabs by demographic means within few generations. Imputations of inferiority derived from biologism are of secondary importance.

Other types of foreign extremists

Antisemitism is of no significance in the ideologies underlying other forms of foreign extremism since other enemy images predominate and because there are usually no regional, religious or political links. Only Turkish left-wing extremists criticise Israel occasionally though without addressing religion or ethnicity in the first place but rather referring to the Israel/Palestine territorial conflict.

Following

It is difficult to determine how many individuals in the field of foreign extremism have antisemitic attitudes since views are obviously harder to put into numbers than, for example, memberships of organisations.

To begin with, there are an estimated 11,000 Ülkücü adherents in Germany. An at least three-digit number of secular extremist Palestinians can be added to this, who, by means of actions in response to specific situations, are able to mobilise an even larger circle of individuals of various political leanings and national origin against Israel.

It is not possible to reliably estimate which members of the respective groups have to be considered merely critical of Israel and which activists are actually motivated by antisemitism.

The following of Palestinian organisations assumed to be hostile towards Israel has grown since 2015 by an undeterminable number of Palestinians who have come to Germany because of the Syrian civil war. Investigations into individual cases have shown that many of them have a hostile attitude towards at least Israel. The fact that they call themselves “Palestinians” (instead of “Arabs” or “Syrians”, for example) also implies a rejection of Israel and the Jewish population living there considered a territorial rival.

These individuals add to the number of those with antisemitic attitudes in Germany. This, then, is imported antisemitism.

II. Examples of antisemitism in the field of foreign extremism

1. Secular Palestinians

a. Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)

Founded in 1967, the cadre organisation Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), which is characterised by secularism, follows Marxist-Leninist principles. Its ideology is marked by a strong nationalism. PFLP strives to establish a Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as the capital, within the borders of historical Palestine before the founding of the State of Israel. This aim is to be reached by eliminating Israel, whose name is never mentioned by PFLP. Instead, PFLP talks about “*the Zionist entity*” and “*the Zionist occupation*”.



Antisemitism in the field of foreign extremism

For example, a press release of PFLP of 29 July 2021 about the opening of the Israeli embassy in the United Arab Emirates reads:

“The opening of the embassy of the Zionist entity in the Emirates is tantamount to supporting the occupation and the aggression directed against our people.”

PFLP denies Israel’s right to exist and openly propagates the armed struggle against the country. Given its goals and ideological orientation, the organisation’s antisemitic agitation is very anti-Zionist in nature. According to its doctrine, Jews are allegedly allowed to live in the prospective state of Palestine as well.

There are approximately 100 PFLP members in Germany. The organisation tries to recruit new adherents among the growing number of Palestinians living in Germany and to raise funds to support its structures and the armed fight in the Middle East.

b. Extremist Palestinian individuals

Since 2015 especially, a large number of rather secular Palestinians have found refuge in Germany who, within the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, frequently express their anti-Israel views. They do so on social media, but occasionally also at public events. They often take a Marxist or social-revolutionary stance without being members of PFLP or other Palestinian political organisations.

c. Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions movement (BDS)

The BDS movement (classified as a suspected threat by BfV) propagates a campaign that calls for a total economic boycott, the withdrawal of investment capital and political sanctions by states against Israel.

According to its own statements, the BDS movement is a worldwide union of 171 chiefly Palestinian organisations (including the terrorist organisations HAMAS and PFLP) which was presumably set up in 2005 shortly after the end of the second intifada. It calls for “freedom, justice, equality” for the Palestinian population, for an end to Israeli occupation and to the allegedly systematic discrimination against Palestinians by Israel (“apartheid”), and for a right to return for all Palestinian “refugees” (including all descendants of those who fled and/or were expelled in 1948).

On 17 May 2019 the German Bundestag adopted a motion jointly tabled by the political parties CDU/CSU, SPD, FDP and Bündnis 90/Die Grünen that was titled “BDS-Bewegung entschlossen entgegentreten – Antisemitismus bekämpfen” (“Effectively countering the BDS

movement – Fighting antisemitism”.²¹⁶ The text says: “*The patterns of argumentation and the methods of the BDS movement are antisemitic.*”²¹⁷

2. Turkish right-wing extremism (Ülkücü movement)

The followers of the Ülkücü ideology promote the idea of an empire called “Turan” that is meant to unite all Turkic peoples as the ruling ethnic group. The intended empire would also comprise large areas outside the Turkish national boundaries of today.

One of the characteristic ideological features is the idealisation of Turkey and Turkishness in combination with a disparagement of other ethnic groups. Deeply rooted antisemitism is a core element of this ideology. The movement, whose followers are called “Grey Wolves”, cultivates an intense hatred of Jews. Nihâl Atsız (1905-1975), one of its leading thinkers, had referred to a number of peoples as enemies as early as 1941 in what is called his “Testament to my son”; he called the Jews “*secret [...] enemies of all peoples.*”

The following passages²¹⁸ illustrate the antisemitism, racism and exaggerated nationalism represented by Atsız that can be regarded as part of the Ülkücü ideology:

*“The second enemy is the Jew. His god is money. He is dishonourable and greedy, and for a few coins in his pocket he does not hesitate to sell the flag in whose shadow he lives. Whatever country he lives in, he is its enemy. But he does not show this enmity openly but laughs and smiles into [people’s] faces.”*²¹⁹

*“Because we never expected them to Turkify. And we never wanted them to. Just as clay never turns into iron no matter how long it dries in the oven, Jews will never turn into Turks, no matter how hard they try. Turkdom is a privilege that is not granted to everyone, and least to people like the Jews.”*²²⁰

The quotations reveal an antisemitism that is based on racist views, alleging that being Jewish is incompatible with “pure” Turkdom. Moreover, “parasitic” features are imputed to Jewish people in general, just as it was inherent in the National Socialist ideology.

“Positive” comments are made on the exclusion, persecution and the final elimination of the Jews in National Socialist Germany, along with statements suggesting that “the Jews”, who are

216 See Deutscher Bundestag, Drucksache 19/10191 (Printed Paper 19/10191), 15 May 2019.

217 Ibid.

218 Translated by BfV.

219 Hüseyin Nihal Atsız, “Orhun” magazine no. 5, 12 March 1934, published in: Hüseyin Nihal Atsız Makaleler IV, Istanbul 2018.

220 Ibid.

referred to as a “repugnant people”, bear the blame for such a “sanguinary hostility” themselves:

“We all know what forms the sanguinary hostility towards Jews has taken in countries like Germany, Poland, Hungary and Romania, and that one day the Jews will surely be thrown out of these countries. Germany is the first country to have dealt with the Jewish question. Other peoples will follow Germany’s example. The fact that even a cautious people like the Swedes are hostile to Jews shows how this repugnant people is seen all over the world.”

Turkish right-wing extremists put pictures of Nihâl Atsız on the walls of their associations’ premises or spread (less offensive) quotations of him on social media. This suggests a clear approval of his explicit antisemitic statements known in these circles.

Antisemitic propaganda presents Jews in general as a controlling, obscure power in the background manipulating the media and inciting animosity among Muslims.

Antisemitism in Turkish right-wing extremism is not a specific, independent form of antisemitism. Its stereotypes and prejudices are the same as in other fields of extremism.



Facebook post of an Ülkücü adherent

The approximately 9,400 Ülkücü adherents that are organised in umbrella associations²²¹ avoid overtly antisemitic statements for strategic reasons in order not to harm their scene’s public image.

During the eleven-day armed clashes in the context of the resurgent Middle East conflict in May 2021, Israeli forces were mainly confronted with HAMAS and PIJ militias. During that time, many Turkish national flags were waved at numerous pro-Palestinian and anti-Israeli demonstrations that took place in Germany. The umbrella associations of the Ülkücü movement, ADÜTDF, ATIB and ANF, did not officially call for participation in anti-Israeli rallies. Neither has any participation of Ülkücü adherents organised in those associations come to notice.

221 These are the umbrella organisation Föderation der Türkisch-Demokratischen Idealistenvereine in Deutschland e. V. (ADÜTDF/ Federation of the Turkish Democratic Idealists’ Associations in Germany regd. assoc.), the Union der Türkisch-Islamischen Kulturvereine in Europa e. V. (ATIB/Union of the Turkish Islamic Cultural Associations in Europe regd. assoc.) and the Föderation der Weltordnung in Europa (ANF/Federation of the World Order in Europe)

However, former officials considered to belong to the umbrella organisations occasionally shared antisemitic contributions on social media during the current conflict between Israel and the Palestinian population:



Translation: "Wait, Palestine [...] Very soon".

This picture shows the Israeli flag being “trampled” by a boot adorned with a Turkish national flag so as to express the fantasy of Israel being crushed by Turkey. The denial of the State of Israel’s right to exist makes it an antisemitic statement.

The contribution also depicts a fictitious occupation of Jerusalem by Turkish soldiers, meaning that the State of Israel, according to this fictitious idea, is to be destroyed.



The Ülkücü followers who are not organised in umbrella organisations (approximately 1,600 individuals) sometimes carry out overt antisemitic hate campaigns.

Within this independent Ülkücü scene, sympathy clearly lies with the Palestinians. On social media, Palestinians are described as victims, often followed by curses against Israel. There are complaints about supposed double standards in the press and society regarding the assessment of Israeli military actions and HAMAS missile attacks. Calls to demonstrate solidarity with the Palestinian population are made or supported, and pictures and videos can be found that prove a participation of Ülkücü members in such demonstrations.

In this connection, followers of the Ülkücü ideology frequently create, share and favourably comment on antisemitic posts on social networks. The following posts of May 2021 deny the State of Israel's right to exist and overtly propagate its elimination:



Translation: "Oh my dear Allah, destroy the tyrant Israel!"



Translation: "May Jerusalem's call to prayer become the mourner's prayer of Israel!"

Depending on political events, the ideologically justified antisemitism is cloaked in seemingly legitimate criticism of Israel. The post opposite by an Ülkücü follower in 2019 is an example of this.

If the #EU would show as much affection and dedication to other peoples in the region, for example the Palestinians, as it shows to its favourite terrorists of the #PKK "Kurds", it would theoretically have to declare war on #Israel!

One common antisemitic and anti-Zionist stereotype is the supposed "double standard" regarding the rule of law and human rights. The cartoon shared on Facebook by a Turkish right-wing extremist in August 2018 complains about the alleged exaggeration of isolated HAMAS



missile attacks against Israel while Israeli combat planes extensively bomb residential areas in the Gaza Strip. According to press releases, more than 150 HAMAS missiles had been fired at Israeli territory in August 2018.

One element of anti-Zionist antisemitism is to deny Israel's right to exist and to defame the State of Israel by accusing it of waging a "war of annihilation" and a policy of "extermination". A tweet by an Ülkücü politician of July 2019 includes his statement on Iran's threats to eliminate Israel and compares them to the alleged "extermination" of Palestinians by the Israelis:

"Iran 'wants to' but does not act. In contrast, #Israel has been 'wanting' and has been 'annihilating' the #Palestinians for years. That is the subtle difference!"

3. Turkish left-wing extremism and PKK

Antisemitism does not play a role in the ideology of Turkish left-wing extremism. No acts motivated by antisemitism committed in Germany by Turkish left-wing extremists have become known so far.

As regards left-wing extremist groups, antisemitism goes against their idea of an idealised, secular and egalitarian state and social order. The aim pursued by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) – greater political and cultural autonomy for Kurds in their countries of origin – does not have any antisemitic points of reference either.

However, there have been isolated cases of argumentation patterns influenced by antisemitism. Edition no. 470 of the PKK newspaper “Serxwebûn”²²² of February 2021 published an excerpt of a book written by PKK founder Abdullah Öcalan. Therein, Öcalan claims that the part played by Jewish capital and Jewish ideologues in “Hitler fascism” must not be underestimated. The partly antisemitic statements of Öcalan are not discussed in public by PKK adherents, though.

Edition no. 471 of “Serxwebûn” of March 2021 includes an article about the coronavirus pandemic and the developments worldwide. Its author, Xebat Andok, presents antisemitic stereotypes about Zionist circles who are allegedly behind the “New World Order”, which, in turn, supposedly only serves to guarantee the safety of Israel and to establish a world government.

The Middle East conflict newly sparked in May 2021 also led to numerous demonstrations of solidarity with Palestine among left-wing extremist groups from the field of foreign extremism, which were, at the same time, directed against the State of Israel. Single calls for and individuals participating in rallies have come to notice.

The Turkish DHKP-C (Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front), as usual, took a clear stand regarding the Palestine conflict and showed solidarity with the Palestinians, whom it considers an ally in the fight against imperialism. In its declarations of solidarity, it said for example:

“Imperialist and Zionist murderers, hands off Gaza!”²²³

“All who lead an anti-imperialist fight are of course on the side of the Palestinian people [...] Down with Zionism! Long live the honourable resistance of the Palestinian people!”²²⁴

222 “Serxwebûn” (“independence”) is a monthly PKK magazine published in the Netherlands. Partly high-ranking PKK cadres continuously write about the ideological orientation of PKK. Along with the “Firat News Agency” (ANF) and the daily newspaper “Yeni Özgür Politika” (YÖP), “Serxwebûn” is one of the most important media of the organisation.

223 Website “Halkin Sesi TV” (15 May 2021).

224 Website “Halkin Sesi TV” (17 May 2021).

III. Conclusion

Antisemitism is an integral part of each form of the Turkish right-wing extremist Ülkücü ideology. However, its members who are organised in formal associations keep a low profile in terms of overtly antisemitic statements. This Ülkücü scene has been relatively stable for years. Ülkücü adherents who are not organised in associations, however, propagate their antisemitism more openly at times.

Over the last few years, there have been signs of a rapprochement between Turkish nationalists, right-wing extremist Ülkücü members and supporters of the current Turkish governing party. In this mixed milieu, the influence exerted from within Turkey is often obvious. The Ülkücü adherents with their antisemitic views also have influence there. It seems likely that antisemitic attitudes may spread further this way.

The investigation of individual cases among extremist secular Palestinians has shown that antisemitic and anti-Israel statements are quite widespread on social media. These are often shared by individuals who are not organised in extremist groups. Many of them have only come to Germany in the years since 2015. Thus, the crisis-related influx of refugees and migrants from Israel's neighbour countries aggravates, as a kind of "side effect", the risk of imported antisemitism.

In other subjects of monitoring within foreign extremism – as for example among extremist Sikhs – antisemitism plays no role at all. This is a result of lacking ideological, religious or territorial links.

G. Antisemitism in left-wing extremism

I. General remarks on antisemitism in left-wing extremism

Left-wing extremist ideologies do not include antisemitism in the sense of an aversion or hostility against Jews as an ethnic group. Therefore, it is nearly impossible for left-wing extremists to openly express antisemitism as this would contradict their scene's political convictions. However, individual left-wing extremists can definitely have antisemitic views and use antisemitic stereotypes.

Historically, antisemitic behaviour and ideas have certainly been a part of German left-wing extremism. It began with the early socialists and the workers' movement in the 19th century; in the late 1960s left-wing extremists committed attacks against Jewish institutions,²²⁵ and some members of the Red Army Faction (RAF) took a decidedly anti-Israeli stance.²²⁶ This form of antisemitism was motivated by anti-capitalism, among other things. Its historical basis was an equation of "Jews" with "capital" – thus, it was not guided by ethnic characteristics.

Today, left-wing extremists mainly adopt anti-Israeli or anti-Zionist positions; Israel and capitalism are often criticised in the same breath. The left-wing extremist scene in Germany is very heterogeneous. It includes two ideological movements which hold different views on the Middle East conflict and on Israel: the "anti-imperialists" and the "anti-Germans".

II. Anti-imperialist spectrum

The anti-imperialist spectrum takes an anti-Israeli position within the left-wing extremist ideology. Anti-imperialist groups can be found in several German federal states.

Their followers believe that "capitalist" states constantly strive for "profit maximisation" and are therefore always looking for new resources, markets and cheap labour and that these states will acquire them by force, if need be. In their view, this behaviour will inevitably lead to colonialism and wars. In this context, the anti-imperialist scene distinguishes between "good" peoples which fight for "liberation" and "evil", warmongering and "capitalist", i.e. imperialist, states which allegedly oppress them.

In practice, this distinction is mainly directed against "the West", both in a geostrategic and ideological sense. Its main focus is the US as the historical "leading nation" among the "capitalist" states during the Cold War and its clash of systems. After the Six Day War of 1967, the

225 Attack on the Jewish community centre in West Berlin on 9 November 1969 (the anniversary of the beginning of the November pogroms of 1938) perpetrated by the group Tupamaros West-Berlin, which was headed by Dieter Kunzelmann.

226 Ulrike Meinhof applauded the 1972 attack in Munich with its hostage-taking and the killing of Israeli Olympic athletes, calling it exemplary and legitimate. See: Die Aktion des Schwarzen September in München. Zur Strategie des antiimperialistischen Kampfes (The action of Black September in Munich. On the strategy of the anti-imperialist fight), November 1972, in: ID Verlag (ed.): Rote Armee Fraktion. Texte und Materialien zur Geschichte der RAF (Red Army Faction. Texts and documents on the history of the RAF), Berlin 1997.

anti-imperialist criticism was extended to Israel. Since that time, protagonists of the anti-imperialist scene have condemned Israel as what they call the extension of the “imperialist” US.

In this connection, it is alleged that Palestine is colonised by Israel, which is thus a colonial regime. When discussing Israeli policies, the scene often uses terms such as “apartheid regime” but also “holocaust”, “pogrom”, “war of extermination” or “genocide”. The intention of this choice of words is to equate Israeli policies with the National Socialists’ mass crimes against humanity. In some cases, Israel’s right to exist is also negated. At the same time, alleged and actual human rights violations by the US and Israel are denounced. In contrast, human rights violations and hostility to democracy in predominantly Muslim societies usually go unmentioned or are consciously ignored. Driven by anti-Zionism, left-wing extremist groups even go as far as to cooperate with Islamist extremist and antisemitic organisations.

However, it is not possible to prove an antisemitic motivation in the sense of an explicit hostility towards Jews. First and foremost, as has been explained, the anti-imperialist scene views Israel as an imperialist and capitalist state, not a Jewish one. On this basis, anti-Zionist positions recurrently take root, leading to sometimes fundamental criticism of the State of Israel or even to the negation of its right to exist. In this context, it must be considered that the ideological background of anti-imperialist movements can make them generally prone to accepting or adopting Israel-related antisemitism.

III. Anti-German spectrum

Within left-wing extremism, so-called anti-Germans take a position that is contrary to anti-imperialism. Referring to Germany’s historical guilt, they declare their solidarity with Israel and the US as its “protective power”. Hence, unlike the anti-imperialist scene, anti-Germans see themselves as being in some sort of self-declared “alliance” with Israel and the US. Anti-German positions can still be found in the left-wing extremist scenes of some German federal states.

In the 1990s and early 2000s the anti-German spectrum had relevant influence in the left-wing extremist scene, even though it had relatively few followers. In recent years anti-German positions have lost their appeal for the scene; due to the scene’s typical heterogeneity, however, this is not a general development across all federal states.

IV. Differences and conflicts within the scene

With regard to the fault lines between the anti-imperialist and the anti-German spectrum, the scene continues to be divided internally. In some federal states, parts of the left-wing extremist scene merely reject the anti-German position and its unconditional solidarity with Israel, but within the scenes in other federal states, this disapproval can actually lead to fantasies of violence or even actual acts of violence. For example, members of Jugendwiderstand

(Youth Resistance) violently attacked a demonstration bloc during the “Revolutionary May Day demonstration” in Berlin in 2018. They tried by force to wrest a banner condemning antisemitism from left-wing extremists with an obviously anti-German attitude.

Jugendwiderstand was an anti-imperialist grouping whose anti-Zionist attitude was radical even by left-wing extremist standards. The group and its leading figure “Taktikka” frequently acted provocatively, using anti-Israeli and even antisemitic texts and slogans, but they remained mostly isolated within the left-wing extremist scene. In 2019 the grouping dissolved, presumably for purely tactical reasons. Jugendwiderstand once registered a rally titled “*Fuck Israel and the US*”; they repeatedly called for “*death to Zionism*” on social media.²²⁷ As early as June 2018 calls for the killing of “Zionists” appeared on the walls of several buildings in Berlin, showing the slogan “*9 mm for Zionists*” and the group’s logo.²²⁸

The left-wing extremist band KGB & Loyal from North Rhine-Westphalia also criticises anti-German positions and Zionism in a song: “*Proud of German riot tradition – no room for Zionism, we will bring death to anti-Germans*”.²²⁹ This is not meant in the sense of a purely German conflict within the scene, but universally targets any positive referral to the State of Israel, as becomes clear in another song saying “*Punching Zios everywhere*” and “*Israel must snuff it*”.²³⁰ These ideological fault lines are also reflected in different left-wing extremist groups’ stances on the BDS movement, which remains controversial within the scene.

V. Demonstrations and overlaps with other fields of extremism

When the situation in the Middle East escalated in May 2021, parts of the left-wing extremist scene held back or did not comment on this conflict at all. Still, left-wing extremist actors attended some events during which antisemitic statements were openly made, presumably by members of the Islamist extremist or foreign extremist scene.

The topic of one of these events was “Nakba”;²³¹ it took place in Cologne on 15 May 2021. During this event, banners were shown and slogans were chanted that said, for instance, “*This is not a conflict – this is a genocide*” or “*We are the men of Mohammed Deif*”²³². It had been reg-

227 Senatsverwaltung für Inneres und Sport Berlin: Verfassungsschutz Berlin. Bericht 2017 (2017 report on the protection of the constitution in Berlin), Berlin 2018, pp. 192-194.

228 Senatsverwaltung für Inneres und Sport Berlin: Verfassungsschutz Berlin: Verfassungsschutz Berlin. Bericht 2018 (2018 report on the protection of the constitution in Berlin), Berlin 2019, p. 170.

229 YouTube (14 November 2018).

230 YouTube (9 November 2018).

231 The Arab term “nakba” means “catastrophe” or “misfortune”. “Nakba Day” can thus be translated as “day of the catastrophe” or “day of misfortune”. It is celebrated every year on 15 May, with Palestinians and their supporters all over the world commemorating the flight and expulsion from the former British Mandate of Palestine in 1948 and 1949.

232 Mohammed Deif headed the al-Qassam Brigades, the military branch of HAMAS, for years. He is held responsible for numerous attacks.

istered by the association Palästina spricht (Palestine speaks out); left-wing extremist groups had joined the calls for attendance and attended the event themselves.

Anti-Zionist slogans can also recurrently be found in the anti-imperialist segment of Hamburg's left-wing extremist scene. In 2018, for example, anti-imperialists posted pictures showing left-wing extremists burning Israeli flags. At the same time, the anti-imperialists called on like-minded individuals to take their "anger at the Zionist entity called Israel to the streets".

Most notably, Roter Aufbau Hamburg (RAH / Red Construction Hamburg) has repeatedly made statements that are hostile to Israel. A Facebook post of 31 May 2021 took up the anti-imperialist narrative of Palestine's alleged colonisation by Israel and at the same time alluded to the comparison with apartheid:

*"Some do not want to see it yet, but war crimes and ethnic cleansing must be designated as such. The Israeli state is an occupying power in the form of settlement colonialism. A racist state that has penned parts of the Palestinian population up in reservations and does not grant equal economic and political rights to other parts on its territory."*²³³

Moreover, a leading member of RAH openly calls for solidarity with PFLP in a Twitter post of 16 May 2021:

*"One may criticise PFLP, but there must be clear resistance to the current discussion of a ban. Criminalising the left in Palestine will only drive people further into the arms of Islamist extremists. Solidarity with PFLP!"*²³⁴

VI. Conclusion

Hostility towards Jews for reasons of ethnicity can usually not be found in German left-wing extremism. The broad majority of German left-wing extremists will not accept other antisemitic positions or stereotypes either. However, there are positions within the left-wing extremist scene that fall in the category of anti-Zionist and/or Israel-related antisemitism. For instance, the Arab/Palestinian side is regarded exclusively as the victim in the Middle East conflict. The security interests of Israel are thus treated as unjustified or deliberately ignored.

Notwithstanding the participation in demonstrations for "solidarity with Palestine", parts of the left-wing extremist scene currently avoid taking a clear stand for either the (militant) Palestinian groupings or the Israeli government. At the same time, there has not been a controversial debate in the scene as a whole. Still, as regards demonstrations in Germany, the Middle

²³³ Facebook profile "Roter Aufbau Hamburg" (31 May 2021).

²³⁴ Twitter profile "Deniz Ergun" (16 May 2021).

East conflict continues to have a potential for mobilisation also in the left-wing extremist scene, depending on the degree of escalation.

There are currently no indications of Jewish institutions in Germany being targeted by left-wing extremists. In the case of a new escalation of violence in the Middle East conflict, however, it cannot be ruled out that pro-Palestinian left-wing extremist circles could carry out “actions” at or in front of Jewish institutions. These could include demonstrations or rallies, but also offences such as damage to property (e.g. graffiti).

In conclusion, it can be said that, even among members of the anti-imperialist spectrum that comes to attention due to anti-Zionist statements, the left-wing extremist scene’s anti-capitalist attitude is not explicitly directed against Jews as such, but rather against an alleged “imperialism” and “capitalism”. Although left-wing extremist criticism of capitalism contains elements of antisemitic prejudice, it is nonetheless not the case that there is general antisemitism in the left-wing extremist scene.

H. Assessment

As illustrated by the antisemitic eruptions in the context of the Middle East conflict in mid-2021 and the overt use of antisemitic stereotypes by the protest movement against the coronavirus policies, antisemitism continued to be virulent to a large extent in the period under review. The previous situation report's general findings are thus still valid. Antisemitism is common in all fields of extremism: in right-wing extremism, among *Reichsbürger* and *Selbstverwalter*, in Islamist extremism and in foreign extremism as well as in left-wing extremism. It can also be found in the field of "anti-constitutional delegitimation of the state". Even though there is this general similarity, it must under no circumstances obscure the striking differences that exist, especially with regard to the importance of antisemitism to the various ideologies and motivations. Clear differences can still be found in the degree of its development and in its forms. Not least, the significance of antisemitism varies even among individual actors of the same field of extremism.

The use of antisemitic explanations to make sense of the world is probably most relevant in **right-wing extremism**. For the traditional and *völkisch* part of this spectrum in particular, a constitutive element is a form of antisemitism mostly based on racist reasoning, which is partly also connected with a rejection of Judaism as a monotheistic religion. Followers of historical National Socialism and most notably members of the violence-oriented scene openly approve of the Nazi regime's antisemitism in its aggressive-repressive or eliminatory form. Antisemitism plays an important role for these groups' internal cohesion and, not least, for their creation. However, other forms of antisemitism can also be observed within the right-wing extremist spectrum. Political parties in particular use them to take up current events. Most of these forms can be classified as secondary and anti-Zionist antisemitism, i.e. their adherents positively refer to National Socialism, downplay and/or deny its crimes, or generally disparage the State of Israel as illegitimate.

Such opportunities to take up current developments have come up in connection with the protests against the measures to contain the **coronavirus pandemic** and in the context of the issue of vaccination. Antisemitism has gained impetus because the conspiracy theories that have spread, including what is known as QAnon, have integrated several classic anti-Jewish ideas at once. Moreover, there has been secondary antisemitism since protesters have placed themselves on the same level with the Jews persecuted and murdered in the Nazi era, thus making light of National Socialist antisemitism. Nonetheless, antisemitism has not been a central element of the protests; they have been attended and organised by very heterogeneous groups and individuals, including extremist circles.

In the **Reichsbürger and Selbstverwalter** scene, for which it is also difficult to identify a common denominator, antisemitism does not play a major role, except among groups and individuals whose ideas are close to those of right-wing extremism. However, conspiracy think-

ing is widespread among Reichsbürger and Selbstverwalter, and they are thus susceptible to the antisemitic notion of a Jewish world conspiracy; but this idea is usually voiced only very guardedly in public.

By contrast, antisemitism carries much more weight in the various **Islamist extremist tendencies and movements**. In this field, hatred of Jews can be seen as a common basis and as having a similarly central role as in right-wing extremism. Based on a certain understanding of Islamic texts and traditions, but mostly fed from (Christian) European reservoirs, all forms of antisemitism exist in Islamist extremism, except racist antisemitism. Some of these forms overlap; however, the most important one within Islamist extremism is anti-Zionist antisemitism directed against the “Jewish state of Israel”. In most cases, however, it is hard to distinguish between a hatred of Jews that is rooted in religious fundamentalism and a primarily political attitude that takes the side of the Islamic Palestinian population and is directed against the mainly Jewish national state of Israel and its citizens.

As regards **foreign extremism**, antisemitism takes various shapes. Turkish right-wing extremism in particular makes use of traditional prejudice; under the banner of the Ülkücü ideology, it propagates a great empire of all Turkic peoples. Political and social, but also racist antisemitism are central elements of this ideology. Anti-Zionist antisemitism, in contrast, plays an important role in the context of the anti-Israeli BDS campaign by secular Palestinians. At the heart of this campaign is the territorial conflict in the Middle East, which has been going on for decades. The campaign is supported by Palestinian terrorist organisations which can be classified as Islamist extremist, but there are also other groups which refer to this campaign in a positive and approving manner.

In **left-wing extremism**, antisemitism is only of secondary importance. Unlike in right-wing extremism or Islamist extremism, it is not part of the ideology. However, left-wing extremist attitudes, mainly ones that are directed against Israel, draw on similar prejudice and antisemitic images as other forms and manifestations of extremism; such attitudes are usually anti-Zionist. The Palestinian BDS campaign turns out to be ideologically compatible with anti-imperialist forms of left-wing extremism too.

Overall, anti-Zionist antisemitism continues to be the most significant form of hostility towards Jews today. Its central role is mainly due to three aspects which are interconnected. First, it has been the most commonly observed form of antisemitism for many years; second, it can be found in all fields of extremism; and third, more than any other form of antisemitism, it can also be linked with current political debates among the general public.

The fact that followers of various extremist ideologies do not exclusively cultivate their own specific forms of hatred of Jews but that they propagate the same anti-Zionist ideas in a similar or even identical way shows the extent of the threat posed by antisemitism. These ideas' compatibility with other issues and their potential to be used for various ideological objec-

tives also show the danger that extremist attitudes may be linked with non-extremist discourses and that the former may influence the latter. Anti-Zionist antisemitism can cover up its antisemitic substance as efficiently as no other form. In recurrent debates, e.g. on the political situation in the Middle East, antisemitic statements may appear less objectionable and stigmatising; antisemitic attitudes may thus be presented as “rational” criticism of Israel.

With regard to Israel, a large share of the population is generally unsure about where to draw the line between legitimate criticism of the Israeli government’s actions and hostility towards Israel that is based on antisemitism. Antisemitic argumentation makes use of these very uncertainties, for instance when claiming that criticism of Israel is a taboo that can only be broken at the price of being unjustly labelled as an antisemite. Revealingly, such insinuations draw on antisemitically influenced ideas themselves, alleging that Jews claim a special status and use the accusation of antisemitism as a tool of power.

It is on the Internet in general and social media in particular that antisemitism becomes clearly visible. However, the relevant websites, discussion and blog platforms, image boards, video portals and gaming servers, just like various sometimes anonymous communication channels on the open Internet or the clandestine darknet as well as Telegram channels and other messenger services, are not only used to make antisemitic statements and to spread propaganda. In fact, this is where radicalisation processes take place, sometimes at breathtaking speed, with users affirming each other, encouraging and strengthening each other in their views. They utter concrete threats, partly use inhuman expressions, indulge in fantasies of destruction and even announce and pay tribute to antisemitic acts of violence.

The Internet has made it significantly easier to produce, spread and receive antisemitic ideas. Not only has it given rise to conspiracy theories containing antisemitic ideas such as QAnon – the digital space is the actual basis of their existence. Many persons in charge at online services such as Facebook and YouTube are increasingly taking measures against racist, antisemitic and other propaganda spread on their platforms. They ban profiles and certain content, thus limiting their reach. At the same time, however, these measures accelerate the trend towards so-called alternative platforms where content is often not controlled by operators, which facilitates the spreading of antisemitic ideas.

Thus, the constantly changing and evolving technical possibilities of the Internet and the means and channels of communication that it provides constitute a major factor in infusing dynamism into today’s antisemitism. It can be assumed that there is a connection between the impressive increase in Internet-based communication that has occurred due to a number of lockdowns and the visible rise in conspiracy theories, especially those permeated by antisemitism. Of course, disinhibition and brutalisation, controlled campaigns and fast-building shitstorms have been on the rise for years. This development is a general phenomenon that regards not only antisemitism but also anti-constitutional hostility towards Islam, for

instance. However, it must always be emphasised that the antisemitism that manifests itself in the virtual space of the Internet is identical to that in the “real world” – and that it is not at all possible to make a distinction. The only difference lies in the nature of the Internet, where such things can be seen more clearly, have more reach and become apparent more quickly than in the real world where they tend to remain unspoken or hidden, but are present nonetheless.

In January 2021 Dr Josef Schuster, the President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, delivered the opening speech to the year celebrating “1,700 years of Jewish life in Germany” and emphasised: “*Championing Jewish life in Germany is not a theoretical issue, but a very concrete challenge.*” This statement referred to the practice of Jewish rites, but it can also be understood as making the case for the fight against antisemitism since this fight is the only way to “*enable Jewish life in Germany in all its facets also in the next 1,700 years.*”²³⁵

235 Schuster, Josef: 1700 Jahre jüdisches Leben (1,700 years of Jewish life). Speech delivered on 6 January 2021, in: www.zentralratderjuden.de, 6 January 2021.

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