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Germany's Insufficient Battle Against Anti-Semitism

by Dr. Manfred Gerstenfeld

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Photos of the burning of a homemade Israeli flag by Muslim demonstrators in Berlin in December 2017 drew international attention due to their association with images of Nazi book burnings in 1933. Senior German politicians have exposed widespread anti-Semitism among the country's Muslims, a situation borne out by various studies. While measures have been announced against Muslim anti-Semitism, the most important action has not been proposed: to screen all those wanting to immigrate for anti-Semitic and anti-Israel attitudes and bar those found to hold such beliefs.

On International Holocaust Remembrance Day, attention was drawn to outbursts of anti-Semitism in European countries. International attention should focus primarily on the surge of anti-Semitism and its newest mutation, Israel-hatred, which has materialized in Germany. It is appearing there even though fewer Jews live there than in France or Britain, and despite the highly problematic situation of the Jews of France.

All three countries are major importers of people from Muslim nations where the majority of the population is anti-Semitic. Germany, however, due to its two-year-old policy of welcoming more than 1.3 million mainly Muslim migrants, has destabilized both its society at large and the German Jewish community.

The two major German parties took a huge beating in the September 2017 elections. The Christian Democrats (CDU) – the party of Chancellor Angela Merkel – received its lowest percentage of votes since 1949. The socialist SPD has never received so low a percentage of the vote in the history of postwar Germany. The AfD, a young right-wing anti-Islam movement, became the

third-largest party. In polls taken after the election, the AfD maintained its support despite internal problems.

Merkel spoke on the occasion of International Holocaust Remembrance Day. She said it was shameful that no Jewish institution in Germany can exist without police protection. She has, however, been Chancellor since 2005, and the situation for German Jews has deteriorated during her years in office.

In December 2017, [a homemade Israeli flag was burned by Muslims in Berlin](#). Though no one was hurt, making this a relatively minor incident, it conjured associations with the far more serious 1933 book burnings by the Nazis. Many politicians and others in Germany reacted with horror.

In the past, German authorities have tried to attribute as many anti-Semitic incidents as possible to right-wing sources. This was probably false in a number of cases. But after the flag burning, the role of Muslim anti-Semites in the overall problem can no longer be ignored. Germany's President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, a Social Democrat, said the responsibility of Germany for its history "knows no limits for those who were born later and [offers] no exceptions for immigrants." He added, "[This is not negotiable for all those who live in Germany and want to live here.](#)"

Other politicians were more direct. Stephan Harbarth, Deputy Chairman of the CDU/CSU faction in the Bundestag (the German parliament), said: "[We have to strongly confront the anti-Semitism of migrants](#) with an Arab background and those from African countries."

The clearest statement came from CDU Deputy Finance Minister Jens Spahn, who is often mentioned as a possible successor to Merkel. In an interview, he said he saw the immigration from Muslim countries as a reason for the recent anti-Semitic demonstrations in Berlin. Spahn said these events "are also related to the immigration from a cultural environment in which one does not act weakly toward Jews or gays."

Spahn added that when anti-Semitism is preached every day in the news, in the family, and in the mosque, "[t]hese anchored attitudes are long-lasting." He said it is the reality, not a theory, that Muslim migration has brought new anti-Semitism to Western Europe. Unlike in Western Europe, where anti-Semitism is despised, it is an "omnipresent part of daily life" in Muslim countries. Spahn went on to say that Muslim organizations have an obligation to take a clear position. "[When there is anti-Islamic hatred they rightly expect that we act against it. Thus, we should together show our flag against anti-Semitism.](#)"

The Bundestag has voted in favor of the appointment of a national commissioner for anti-Semitism. That there is a need today for such a position, more than seventy-five years after the defeat of Nazi Germany, speaks volumes.

It brings to light the 2018 reality of Germany. It includes a small percentage of neo-Nazis and a large number of people with a demonic view of Israel. Studies over the past ten years show that more than 40% of Germans consider Israel a Nazi state. Studies also illustrate the presence of major classic anti-Semitism as well as its newest mutation, anti-Israelism, among recent Syrian and Iraqi immigrants.

The one measure that would be most meaningful has not yet been proposed: to screen all incoming immigrants for anti-Semitic and anti-Israel attitudes and to bar those found to hold such beliefs. If this had been done as part of the welcome policy, many hundreds of thousands would not have been allowed to enter Germany. Additional hundreds of thousands, many of them Muslim, are expected to immigrate to Germany in the coming years. We should thus expect to hear a lot more about anti-Semitism in Germany as the country grapples with the fallout of its unwise refugee policy.

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