

Matthias J. Becker

# The German Left and Israel

## Abstract

Within society and public discourse, antisemitism is still perceived as emanating predominantly from the political Right. However, reactions to the Six-Day War in 1967 demonstrated the fallacy of this assumption. Anti-Zionist attitudes spread in German public discourse, notably among the *New Left*.

Although the Left attempts to distance itself from antisemitism, it nevertheless justifies the reproduction of traditional antisemitic stereotypes (e.g., the greedy Jewish capitalist) and the use of antisemitic metaphors (e.g., *plague of locusts*) through the following two demonizing maneuvers:

One, Israel has been associated since the late 1960s with ideologies that the Left clearly rejects: colonialism and imperialism, oppression, militarism, and chauvinism. The Left has always positioned itself on the side of the weak against the mighty. In the context of the Mideast conflict, this means showing solidarity with the Palestinians. Based on such a perspective, Israel has been continuously blamed as the cruel and mighty oppressor. Leftists have seen Israel as the bridgehead for the United States into the Arab world and partly interpret American support as the expression of the alleged Jewish global power.

Two, parts of the German left have declared Israelis to be the “new Nazis” and compare the Mideast conflict to the Holocaust. Through such demonizing analogies, German atrocities are trivialized and identification with the German in-group takes place. Additionally, when claiming that the Mideast conflict resembles Nazi atrocities, Germans are able to emphasize their sensitivity regarding their own history and, as a result, feel morally superior. This leads to the birth of “honorable antisemitism,”<sup>1</sup> wrapped in anti-Zionist reproaches.

The way in which such distorted perspectives on Israel and the Mideast conflict are uttered depends to a large extent on the motives and the background of the speaker. Whilst the Far Left depicts Israel and Jews as colonialists and imperialists, center-left milieus see themselves as advocates for human rights, eloquently advocating for the secularization of Israel and the abandonment of Zionism. Both groups, however, charge Israel with backward and immoral behavior and give it the status of a pariah.

---

1 J. Améry, “Der ehrbare Antisemitismus,” *Werke: Aufsätze zur Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, ed. S. Steiner (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2005 [1969]), 7:131.

Its “rhetorical flexibility”<sup>2</sup> makes this form of hatred toward Israel so attractive to the mainstream society. Speakers distance themselves from conventional forms of antisemitism, emphasizing—based on their ideological position—that it is impossible for them to hold prejudices against Jews. Antisemitism in this form is presented as legitimate criticism of Israel while at the same time, the taboo of criticizing the Jewish state (another antisemitic stereotype) is emphasized. Left Israel-related antisemitism can then be embraced by the mainstream; its social acceptability makes it much more dangerous than the limited appeal of traditional forms of Jew-hatred.

## 1 Introduction

Scholarship and the broad public tend to perceive antisemitism as a constitutive component of a right-wing worldview. Since the 1990s and especially since the Second Intifada (2000), however, antisemitism in the left political sphere has become a de-facto part of the discourse as well. Related discussions in the public, throughout different left groups, but also in academia can be characterized as being highly emotional. The reason for this might be that antisemitism within the leftist worldview still sounds oxymoronic, that is, antisemitism on the left is opposed to the self-conception of left groups.

Since antisemitism on the left must be perceived within the context of anti-Zionism, I will first clarify the latter term. This, in turn, requires the understanding of what left milieus mean when they use the term *Zionism*. The meanings of terms shift throughout history. Only through consideration of the ideological background as well as the historical genesis of these phenomena,<sup>3</sup> current patterns of language use (including their communicative functions) can be understood and classified as being expressions of antisemitism in the left political sphere.<sup>4</sup>

---

2 M.W. Kloke, “Kein Frieden mit Israel: Antizionismus in der ‘gebildeten’ Linken,” in *Gebildeter Antisemitismus: Eine Herausforderung für Politik und Zivilgesellschaft*, ed. M. Schwarz-Friesel (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2015), 160.

3 A historical overview will be given in part 3 of this article.

4 The linguistic characteristics will be explored in part 4 of this article.

## 2 Terminology

Wide parts of the Left saw (and still see) Zionism as a reactionary ideology that propagates an “incompatibility between Jews and non-Jews.”<sup>5</sup> Through such an interpretation of Zionism as a backward nationalism, it is perceived as an obstacle for the leftist aspiration of overcoming nation statehood and establishing a classless society.<sup>6</sup> In light of the historical reasons for the emergence of Zionism, such a conception decontextualizes the Zionist movement and relativizes antisemitism.<sup>7</sup>

Anti-Zionism is an ideology that is opposed to the alleged character of Zionism and aims at overcoming the Zionist movement.<sup>8</sup> The hostility toward Israel is placed within the core of the ideology. The elements that constitute anti-Zionism and its historical genesis will be elucidated in part 3 of this article.

Often people (not only) on the left emphasize that there is a difference between anti-Zionism and antisemitism.<sup>9</sup> From a historical perspective, the two

---

5 T. Haury, “Der neue Antisemitismusstreit der deutschen Linken,” in *Neuer Antisemitismus? Eine globale Debatte*, ed. D. Rabinovici, U. Speck, and N. Sznajder (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2004), 147.

6 Further on, I will indicate that a left worldview does by no means exclude nationalism and the construction of *per se good peoples* (e.g., standing up against the finance capital). In addition, left-liberal elites repeatedly raise the claim that nationalism in its extreme form has been vanquished in Western Europe and especially in Germany—while Zionism, however, remains to be a relic of nationalist tendencies in Europe’s past (regarding post-national self-images among European elites cf. A. S. Markovits, “Europäischer Antiamerikanismus und Antisemitismus: Immer gegenwärtig, obwohl immer verleugnet,” in *Exklusive Solidarität: Linker Antisemitismus in Deutschland: Vom Idealismus zur Antiglobalisierungsbewegung*, ed. M. Brosch et al. [Berlin: Metropolis, 2007], 241).

7 Zionism has its political roots in the end of the nineteenth century and got a huge reputation with Theodor Herzl’s writing “Der Judenstaat” from 1896. As a reaction to increasing antisemitism, the declared aim of the Zionist movement was the founding or reconstitution of a Jewish national state in Palestine (cf. T. Stein, *Zwischen Antisemitismus und Israelkritik: Antizionismus in der deutschen Linken* [Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2011], 28). Relativizing antisemitism among left groups however started even before they dealt out criticism against Zionism (see part 3 of this article).

8 Cf. H. J. Schmidt, *Antizionismus, Israelkritik und “Judenknax”: Antisemitismus in der deutschen Linken nach 1945* (Bonn: Bouvier, 2010), 11.

9 With regards to the definition of antisemitism: “Antisemitism as a mental system of belief and of interpretation of the world has been passed down through the centuries, always adapted to current conditions and correspondingly modified, yet without changes in the underlying conceptual constants, according to which Jews categorically function as THE OTHER. [...] In antisemites’ mentally fixed binary construction of the world, Judaism figures as the ultimate opposite of their own form of existence. Accordingly, Jews, with the imagined characteristics imputed to them,

phenomena are of course not identical, since they originate from different ideological standpoints. A differentiation can therefore be legitimate when looking at an early historical stage. However, considering the genesis as well as current patterns and actualizations of both phenomena, a differentiation does not meet the characteristic of antisemitism, which is to continuously—and in accordance with own values and principles—adapt to present conditions. During long parts of its historical existence as well as in its current shape, anti-Zionism can rather be characterized as a “synonym”<sup>10</sup> of antisemitism:

Anti-Zionism solely superficially appears to be an attitude on its own. In reality, it simply is a new form of latent antisemitism in disguise that in contrast to passed on hostility toward Jews has less a religious but rather a political and economic basis.<sup>11</sup>

Particularly in its goal of destroying the State of Israel, which nowadays is the “most important symbol of Jewish life and survival,”<sup>12</sup> the synonymous, however socially acceptable status of anti-Zionism becomes apparent:

Contemporary anti-Zionism, which rejects or delegitimizes the existence of the Jewish state, functions to a great extent “as a ticket for the traditional hostility toward Jews, and its ultima ratio is the annihilation of Israel.”<sup>13</sup>

According to the characterization of anti-Zionism as a “ticket” for traditional antisemitism, Haury<sup>14</sup> stresses that the anti-imperialism of the Left—that with re-

---

embody that which is categorically non-normal and bad. Antisemitism thus signifies exclusion of Jews and Judaism by labeling them as the absolute and total negation of the world order defined as normal.” M. Schwarz-Friesel and J. Reinharz, *Inside the Antisemitic Mind: The Language of Jew-Hatred in Contemporary Germany* (Boston: University Press of New England, 2017), 18. With regards to the definition of verbal antisemitism: “All linguistic utterances that devalue, stigmatize, discriminate against, and defame Jews *qua* Jews can be considered forms of verbal antisemitism. These are utterances, in other words, that can be coded as stereotypes hostile toward Jews and that are used to transmit resentments.” *Ibid.*, 19).

**10** W. Laqueur, *Gesichter des Antisemitismus: Von den Anfängen bis heute* (Berlin: Propyläen, 2008), 18.

**11** L. Mertens, “Antizionismus: Feindschaft gegen Israel als eine neue Form des Antisemitismus,” in *Antisemitismus in Deutschland: Zur Aktualität eines Vorurteils*, ed. W. Benz (München: DTV, 1995), 89.

**12** Schwarz-Friesel and Reinharz, *Inside the Antisemitic Mind*, 145.

**13** L. Rensmann and J. H. Schoeps, eds., *Feindbild Judentum: Antisemitismus in Europa* (Berlin: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg, 2008), 17.

**14** T. Haury, “Die ideologischen Grundlagen des Antizionismus in der Linken” (D-A-S-H, 2005), [http://www.d-a-s-h.org/dossier/07/08\\_grundlagenantizionismus.html](http://www.d-a-s-h.org/dossier/07/08_grundlagenantizionismus.html).

spect to the Mideast (conflict) comes along as anti-Zionism—shows antisemitic patterns:

The anti-imperialist world-view of the New Left was shaped by Manichaeism, personification, conspiracy theory and the opposition to good “peoples” versus the bad finance capital and therefore it was structurally antisemitic [...]<sup>15</sup>

Applying the linguistic approach to the present-day antisemitism, Schwarz-Friesel and Reinharz also emphasize that both phenomena must be seen as closely related on the linguistic level. They therefore categorize anti-Zionism as subtype of Israel-related antisemitism respectively of anti-Israelism:<sup>16</sup>

[...] because anti-Israelism and anti-Zionism are often inextricably linked and because usually no linguistic distinction is made, we subsume this variant under anti-Israelism.<sup>17</sup>

Anti-Zionism in large parts of its historical, and almost completely in its present-day shape, is tainted with antisemitic elements. Its purpose is the one of an identity-forming feature, a “cultural code.”<sup>18</sup> This facilitates the affiliation to a particular cultural milieu in which the reproduction of antisemitic stereotypes is the expression of illegitimate attitudes. Through the loop of anti-Zionism, antisemitic stereotypes and other forms of Israel-related antisemitism<sup>19</sup> can be justified and finally can reach the status of what is permissible to say. Related interpretations of global states and processes get reinforced through diverse antiisms<sup>20</sup> that constitute a simplified, “one-dimensional worldview,”<sup>21</sup> to be especially characterized by a distorting dichotomy between *the good* and *the evil*.

---

15 Ibid.

16 Schwarz-Friesel and Reinharz, *Inside the Antisemitic Mind*, 145. With concerns to the definition of Israel-related antisemitism cf. also EUMC, “Working Definition of Antisemitism” (2004), 229.

17 Schwarz-Friesel and Reinharz, *Inside the Antisemitic Mind*, 371.

18 S. Volkov, *Antisemitismus als kultureller Code: Zehn Essays* (München: C.H. Beck, 2000), 83.

19 Cf. EUMC, “Working Definition of Antisemitism.”

20 Next to anti-Zionism, anti-Americanism, anti-capitalism, anti-modernism, anti-militarism as well as anti-imperialism constitute a self-contained model of interpreting the world.

21 Haury, “Die ideologischen Grundlagen.”

### 3 Genesis of Left-wing Antisemitism

Hostility toward Jews among the Left existed even before Israel was founded.<sup>22</sup> Hence, it cannot be limited to the time frame after 1948. Hostility toward Jews is the oldest hatred in human history and has for centuries constituted an integral characteristic of European culture, which could (and still can) be observed among all social groups. Even philosophers of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century such as Voltaire, Kant, and Fichte,<sup>23</sup> as well as leading representatives of the labor movement and theoreticians of socialism such as Karl Marx, expressed antisemitic attitudes.<sup>24</sup> In addition, examples including the early socialists such as Charles Fourier and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Russian anarchists such as Mikhail Bakunin and others, the Stalinist show trials, and the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) of the Weimar Republic may be mentioned.<sup>25</sup> Calls,

---

22 Cf. L. Poliakov, *Geschichte des Antisemitismus. Band V: Die Aufklärung und ihre judenfeindliche Tendenz* (Worms: Heintz, 1983); E. Silberner, *Kommunisten zur Judenfrage: Zur Geschichte von Theorie und Praxis des Kommunismus* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1983).

23 Cf. E. Silberner, *Sozialisten zur Judenfrage: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Sozialismus vom Anfang des 19. Jahrhunderts bis 1914* (Berlin: Colloquium, 1962), 286; Schwarz-Friesel and Reinharz, *Inside the Antisemitic Mind*, 36.

24 Whether Marx was really an antisemite is being thoroughly debated among scholars. It is a fact that he (as well as many other leftists) also criticized antisemitism. T. Stein indicates that “such statements [...] [were] less the reflection of a genuinely left antisemitism from a specifically left-minded model for interpreting the world, but rather, due to macro social structures of prejudice that could also affect left-wing patterns of judgement. A socialist or a person believing in the ideals of Enlightenment was therefore not automatically immune to the adoption of anti-Jewish prejudices,” Stein, *Zwischen Antisemitismus und Israelkritik*, 81; cf. also H. Brunkhorst, “Die falsch gestellte Frage: War Marx Antisemit?” *Blätter* 8 (2014): 110–18, <https://www.blaetter.de/archiv/jahrgaenge/2014/august/die-falsch-gestellte-frage>. For antisemitism on the Left at that time cf. inter alia Silberner, *Sozialisten zur Judenfrage*, 137; M.W. Kloke, *Israel und die deutsche Linke: Zur Geschichte eines schwierigen Verhältnisses* (Frankfurt: Haag und Herchen, 1994), 30; T. Haury, *Antisemitismus von links: Kommunistische Ideologie, Nationalismus und Antizionismus in der frühen DDR* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2002), 160.

25 Cf. Silberner, *Sozialisten zur Judenfrage*, and *Kommunisten zur Judenfrage*; Poliakov, *Geschichte des Antisemitismus*; M. Kessler, *Antisemitismus, Zionismus und Sozialismus: Arbeiterbewegung und jüdische Frage im 20. Jahrhundert* (Mainz: Decaton, 1994); O. Kistenmacher, “Vom ‘Judas’ zum ‘Judenkapital’: Antisemitische Denkformen in der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands der Weimarer Republik, 1918–1933,” in *Exklusive Solidarität: Linker Antisemitismus in Deutschland. Vom Idealismus zur Antiglobalisierungsbewegung*, ed. M. Brosch et al. (Berlin: Metropol, 2007), and *ibid.*, *Arbeit und “jüdisches Kapital”: Antisemitische Aussagen in der KPD-Tageszeitung “Die Rote Fahne” während der Weimarer Republik* (Bremen: edition lumière, 2016); K. Holz, *Nationaler Antisemitismus: Wissenssoziologie einer Weltanschauung* (Hamburg: Hambur-

particularly the one from central committee (ZK) member, Ruth Fischer, in 1923, to resist the “capitalist Jews” by “hanging” them on lanterns and “trampling”<sup>26</sup> them, demonstrate the explicit nature with which antisemitism was expressed in left milieus at the beginning of the twentieth century.

The term *anti-Zionism* is originally disconnected from such forms of left-wing antisemitism. It can be found, amongst others, in Jewish minorities and illustrates the—by no means uniform, very heterogeneous, and widespread—attitude of many European Jews regarding the pursuit of a Jewish homeland. The Jews who represented principles of emancipation and assimilation in their respective European civil societies were opposed to this pursuit in particular.<sup>27</sup> In Germany, it was the liberal *Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens* (*Central Association of German Citizens of Jewish Faith*) that sought to enforce civic as well as equal rights for Jews, emphasize the loyalty of German Jews toward Germany, and strengthen the Jewish self-confidence. The *Centralverein* rejected the Zionist belief in a Jewish nation with its own history, culture, and future. Also, orthodox Jews opposed Zionism as it demanded the return to the holy land of Israel before the arrival of the Messiah. The *Allgemeiner Jüdischer Arbeiterbund* (*General Jewish Labour Bund in Lithuania, Poland, and Russia*, generally called *The Bund*) in East Europe was the most prominent anti-Zionist movement of the Jewish left—here, Zionism was rejected as bourgeois and therefore reactionary Jewish nationalism.<sup>28</sup>

The rejection of Zionism represented a dominant attitude also in non-Jewish leftist groups. Here, Zionism was characterized as backward and competing with the socialist movement. However, the rejection of Jewish nationalism had its basis in a constant underestimation of antisemitism and hatred of Jews was meant to be eliminated in the course of the planned revolution in any event.<sup>29</sup>

Anti-Zionism *before* Auschwitz must be distinguished from the Marxist-Leninist anti-Zionism of the late Stalinism.<sup>30</sup> The latter is based on an anti-imperia-

---

ger Edition, 2010); J. Gerber, *Ein Prozess in Prag: Das Volk gegen Rudolf Slánský und Genossen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016).

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in N. Müller and O. Maruszyk, *Marxistische Faschismusanalysen als Zeitdiagnose: Zur unterschiedlichen Rezeption des Nationalsozialismus* (München: AVM Akademische Verlagsgemeinschaft, 2014), 27.

<sup>27</sup> Volkov, *Antisemitismus als kultureller Code*, 77.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Kessler, *Antisemitismus, Zionismus und Sozialismus*, 92; Stein, *Zwischen Antisemitismus und Israelkritik*, 28.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. P. Ullrich, *Die Linke, Israel und Palästina: Nahostdiskurse in Großbritannien und Deutschland* (Berlin: Dietz, 2008), 84.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Stein, *Zwischen Antisemitismus und Israelkritik*, 29.

list worldview and arose mainly in the realm of power of Stalin's Soviet Union.<sup>31</sup> It represents a continuation of an anti-Zionist bias that characterized the relation of certain parts of the Left with concerns for Judaism, even before the Middle East conflict erupted. This emerging anti-Zionism exhibited a structural, contextual, and functional proximity with antisemitic views (not least through the reproduction of stereotypes), even though mostly lacking an otherwise "traditional," racist component<sup>32</sup>—conceptually, this "anti-Zionism after Auschwitz"<sup>33</sup> considered itself to be antifascist and, thus, had to avoid any antisemitic connotation. From then on, this early form of anti-Zionism has had an impact on other left-wing groups outside of the Soviet Union.

In the German Democratic Republic (DDR) that defined itself as antifascist and anti-imperialist, anti-Zionism was part of the state-approved propaganda.<sup>34</sup> Israel was characterized as a "spearhead of the imperialist camp,"<sup>35</sup> Zionism as an "'anomaly' of capitalist imperialism,"<sup>36</sup> as a devastating demon as well as the case example of colonialism. This led to a socially acceptable anti-Zionist outlook, which was in accordance with then hegemonic perceptions in society. The anti-Zionist propaganda was steadily fed with antisemitic content, especially after the Six-Day War in 1967. It received a special place in an ideology that equated Zionism not only with nationalism but also with economic expansionism.

By construing the State of Israel as regional henchman of US imperialism, the alleged symbiosis of these two states could be presented as the root of all evil. Allegations such as "global conspiracy of [...] Wall street capitalists" as

---

31 This Marxist-Leninist anti-imperialism is an ideological element of Marxism stemming from Lenin that also reached the Left in Germany in a rather dogmatic manifestation. It has to be distinguished from anti-imperialism in a broader sense that rejects all forms of occupation and colonialism (cf. Ullrich, *Die Linke, Israel und Palästina*, 42; Stein, *Zwischen Antisemitismus und Israelkritik*, 29; S. Salzborn, *Kampf der Ideen: Die Geschichte politischer Theorien im Kontext* [Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2017]).

32 Cf. Haury, *Antisemitismus von links*, 429.

33 Stein, *Zwischen Antisemitismus und Israelkritik*, 29.

34 Cf. A. Timm, *Hammer, Zirkel, Davidstern: Das gestörte Verhältnis der DDR zu Zionismus und Staat Israel* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1997); Haury, *Antisemitismus von links*; M.W. Kloke, "Antisemitismus in der Linkspartei: 'DIE LINKE hat ein Problem mit Antisemitinnen und Antisemiten'," in *Antisemitismus in deutschen Parteien*, ed. D. Ionescu and S. Salzborn (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2014), 153–90; J. Herf, *Undeclared Wars with Israel: East Germany and the West German Far Left, 1967–1989* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); S. Meining, "Zwischen Nichtbeziehung, Feindschaft und später Annäherung: die Deutsche Demokratische Republik und Israel," in *Deutschland, die Juden und der Staat Israel: Eine politische Bestandsaufnahme*, ed. O. Glöckner and J. H. Schoeps (Hildesheim: Olms, 2016).

35 Kloke, "Antisemitismus in der Linkspartei," 154.

36 Mertens, "Antizionismus: Feindschaft gegen Israel," 89.

well as a dichotomization between “working nations” and “financial hyenas and parasites”<sup>37</sup> not only confirmed antisemitic stereotypes but also raised the persuasive potential of such demonization. In this worldview, Jews and/or Zionists served as scapegoats—albeit the GDR actually strove to overcome discrimination toward humans based on their affiliation with a certain group.<sup>38</sup> With the aid of such rhetorical constructions, a collective identity was to be created and the new ruling system was thereby justified—the latter being necessary in the face of the countless problems that occurred during the formation of socialism. In addition, the obsessive comparison between Zionism and National Socialism can be classified as exonerative antisemitism, fulfilling the need for relief and exculpation from Nazi crimes.<sup>39</sup>

The vast majority of the West German left,<sup>40</sup> however, can be characterized as pro-Israel, partly even philosemitic, during the 1950s to the mid-1960s. Such attitudes can be partially explained by the knowledge and the shame regarding the Shoah.<sup>41</sup> Strong enthusiasm for the progressive pioneer state with its socialist kibbutzim existed both within the social democratic as well as the Christian left.<sup>42</sup> This promptly changed with the Six-Day War in 1967, triggering an exhaus-

---

37 Haury, *Antisemitismus von links*, 429.

38 Cf. Kloke, “Antisemitismus in der Linkspartei,” 154.

39 Cf. *ibid.*; cf. also Mertens, “Antizionismus: Feindschaft gegen Israel,” 93.

40 Regarding the genesis of antisemitism among the West German left, see specifically the comprehensive studies by Kloke, *Israel und die deutsche Linke*, and L. Rensmann, *Demokratie und Judenbild: Antisemitismus in der politischen Kultur der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2004).

41 Cf. D. Cesarani, *The Left and the Jews: The Jews and the Left* (London: Labour Friends of Israel, 2004), 63; Haury, “Der neue Antisemitismusstreit der deutschen Linken,” 144; C. Globisch, *Radikaler Antisemitismus: Inklusions- und Exklusionssemantiken von links und rechts in Deutschland* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2013), 43.

42 Cf. Cesarani, *The Left and the Jews*; M.W. Kloke, “Zum Antisemitismus in der deutschen Linken,” *Jüdisches Forum für Demokratie und gegen Antisemitismus*, 2017, <https://jfda.de/blog/2017/09/18/zum-antisemitismus-in-der-deutschen-linken>. The federal German *Communist Party of Germany* (KPD) showed a temporary rapprochement toward Israel. Yet, this already changed during the Suez crisis in 1956 that was followed by an anti-Zionist smear campaign (cf. J. Edmunds, “The Left’s Views on Israel: From the Establishment of the Jewish State to the Intifada” [PhD diss., London School of Economics and Political Science, 1997], 2; J.-Y. Camus, “The French Left and Political Islam: Secularism versus the Temptation of an Alliance,” *Engage*, 3 [2006], <https://engageonline.wordpress.com/2015/11/04/the-french-left-and-political-islam-secularism-versus-the-temptation-of-an-alliance-jean-yves-camus-engage-journal-issue-3-september-2006>). However, it did not share the same quality of hatred toward Israel as East European and especially Soviet anti-Zionism (cf. R. S. Wistrich, “Left-Wing Anti-Zionism in Western Societies,” in *Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism in the Contemporary World* [London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990], 49).

tive erosion of solidarity among the leftist groups, who now considered themselves as *anti-imperialist*.<sup>43</sup> The fact that Israel could preventively defend itself against an imminent attack from the Arab states represented a “sin”<sup>44</sup> within “the leftist logic of categorical solidarity with the victims.”<sup>45</sup> Moreover, conservative milieus increasingly expressed sympathy with Israel, and this led to a change of thinking among the leftist groups.<sup>46</sup>

The (more and more antisemitic) ideology of anti-Zionism (in connection with anti-Americanism) represented a completely natural component for the arising New Left<sup>47</sup> during the 1970s up until the end of the 1980s in West Germany. Israel, the concept of the enemy, became the nexus that brought a “political-ideological closing of ranks”<sup>48</sup> for the disunited left.

Ever since, it is of particular concern for the Left to demonstrate solidarity with the Palestinians and to support the fight of the *Palestine Liberation Organization* (PLO) against Israel.<sup>49</sup> Introduced by the *Socialist German Student Federation* (SDS),<sup>50</sup> the *Extra-Parliamentary Opposition* (APO), the civil rights movement and the 1968 movement, leftist groups established many Palestine Committees from the 1970s onwards. Unlike traditionally left movements, these leftists put their hopes of overthrowing capitalist systems in the so-called national liberation movements in the “Third World,” that is, in Africa, Asia, South America, and primarily in the Middle East. The focus on these non-European movements served as identification objects and allowed an unambiguous and therefore persuasive dichotomization between the rulers and the ruled—a reduced perception of political and economic processes that stressed their worldview. After the unsuccessful attempt by the APO to trigger revolutionary impulses in West Germany, this was a crucial step toward self-legitimization.<sup>51</sup>

In accordance with a fraternization with, as well as pure romanticization of, *fighting peoples* as well as by “applying the anti-imperialist scheme to the [Mid-

---

43 Cf. Haury, *Antisemitismus von links*.

44 Kloke, “Kein Frieden mit Israel,” 161.

45 Globisch, *Radikaler Antisemitismus*, 44.

46 Cf. Kloke, *Israel und die deutsche Linke*, 183.

47 The New Left was constituted by the *Socialist German Student Federation* (SDS), the *Extra-Parliamentary Opposition* (APO), the subsequently following or seceding groups (comprising also the Maoist K-Groups), the *Urban Guerilleros* as well as the emerging ecological movement and the political party *The Greens*.

48 Rensmann, *Demokratie und Judenbild*, 299.

49 Cf. Kloke, *Israel und die deutsche Linke*, 106.

50 The SDS was the 1961-founded hotbed of the New Left, which was the first to dissociate itself from the Socialist-Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) drifting to the Right.

51 Cf. Haury, “Die ideologischen Grundlagen.”

dle East] conflict,”<sup>52</sup> Israel was demonized and delegitimized in numerous left-wing publications,<sup>53</sup> claiming that it is a “Zionist aggressor state,” a “bridgehead of US imperialism,” an “oppressor of Arabic peoples’ liberation efforts” or an “artificial entity built on stolen land and with scrounged money,” showing a “parasitic character.”<sup>54</sup> Applying this explanatory (and strongly evaluative) scheme, almost all political conflicts were related to Israel (and Jews), with Jews described as the absolute evil. In the end, this led to a point where anti-Zionism became—also in West Germany—a model for interpreting the world.

The above-mentioned utterances coming from the then left milieus raise, once again, the questionability of separating anti-Zionism from antisemitism.<sup>55</sup> Antisemitism could be observed on the basis of not only the language use, but also of concrete actions by leftist protagonists: the attack on the Jewish community house in West Berlin on November 9, 1969 by the *Tupamaros of West Berlin* (which was justified with the foregoing narrative) proves how much the rejection of Israel was tainted with antisemitism.<sup>56</sup> Besides this act of terrorism, further incidents of the 1960s and 1970s included the arson attack on a nursing home in the Jewish community in Munich,<sup>57</sup> the sympathetic responses of the Red Army Faction (RAF) and other groups with regards to the assassination of Israeli athletes during the Olympic Games in Munich in 1972 by the Palestinian *Black September Organization*,<sup>58</sup> the hijacking of an *Air France* airplane by Pales-

---

52 T. Haury, “Zur Logik des bundesdeutschen Antizionismus,” in *Vom Antizionismus zum Antisemitismus*, ed. L. Poliakov (Freiburg: ça ira, 1993), 141.

53 These included back then and in the following decades amongst others the daily newspaper *junge Welt*, leaflets of various Middle Eastern groups, the publications *Rote Fahne*, *Linksruck*, and *Rote Presse Korrespondenz*.

54 Haury, “Der neue Antisemitismusstreit der deutschen Linken,” 144; cf. also M.W. Kloke, “Antizionismus und Antisemitismus als Weltanschauung? Tendenzen im deutschen Linksradikalismus und -extremismus,” in *Extremismus in Deutschland: Erscheinungsformen und aktuelle Bestandsaufnahme*, ed. Bundesministerium des Innern (Berlin: BMI, 2004), 173.

55 Cf. Schwarz-Friesel and Reinharz, *Inside the Antisemitic Mind*, 371.

56 Cf. W. Kraushaar, *Die Bombe im Jüdischen Gemeindehaus* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, Institut für Sozialforschung, 2005). For further examples cf. Kloke, *Israel und die deutsche Linke*, and Haury, “Der neue Antisemitismusstreit der deutschen Linken.”

57 Cf. W. Kraushaar, “Wann endlich beginnt bei Euch der Kampf gegen die heilige Kuh Israel?” *München 1970: Über die antisemitischen Wurzeln des deutschen Terrorismus* (Reinbek: Rowohlt Verlag, 2013).

58 Cf. S. Grigat, “Antisemitismus und Antizionismus in der Linken,” *Hagalil*, April 18, 2002, <http://www.hagalil.com/antisemitismus/europa/linker-antisemitismus.htm>.

tinian (*Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP]*) and German (representatives of the *Revolutionary Cells*) terrorists in July 1976.<sup>59</sup>

During the Lebanon War in 1982, Israel was continuously accused of committing a genocide. Meanwhile, particularly among the German left, comparisons between Israel and Nazi Germany became more and more noticeable (e.g., through allusions such as “final solution to the Palestinian question”<sup>60</sup>).

A first turning point, that is, the problematization of the antisemitic content of such statements among the Left could be witnessed in the 1980s. This “time of tensile testing and learning processes”<sup>61</sup> were even further intensified in the 1990s, specifically during the Gulf War in 1991. The prominent outlook in large parts of the Left at that time (trivializing the dictator Saddam Hussein, characterizing the US as belligerent as well as ignoring the concrete danger of war for Israel) led to the separation of the so-called *Antideutschen* (*anti-Germans*)<sup>62</sup> from the anti-imperialist core (which continued to represent the classic anti-Zionist position).<sup>63</sup> Hence, a fundamental shift in perspective happened within single groups within the left milieu in Germany, both regarding the Middle East conflict as well as antisemitism.<sup>64</sup> Since then, left-wing antisemitism was recognized

---

59 After touchdown in the Ugandan city of Entebbe, the passengers were separated into Jewish and non-Jewish groups and the non-Jewish hostages were released. The only hostage that was killed tragically was a concentration camp survivor (cf. V. Weiß, “Die antizionistische Rezeption des Nahostkonflikts in der militanten Linken der BRD,” in *Antisemitismus, Antizionismus, Israelkritik*, ed. M. Zuckermann [Göttingen: Wallstein, 2005], 231; Stein, *Zwischen Antisemitismus und Israelkritik*, 52).

60 Haury, “Der neue Antisemitismusstreit der deutschen Linken,” 145; for its function and linguistic patterns, see part 4 of this article.

61 Cf. Kloke, “Antizionismus und Antisemitismus als Weltanschauung?,” 177.

62 Mouthpieces of the political camp of the *Antideutschen* amongst others were the weekly newspaper *Jungle World* (dissociated from the *junge Welt*) as well as the magazines *Bahamas* and *konkret*.

63 Cf. Haury, “Der neue Antisemitismusstreit der deutschen Linken,” 143. For a detailed analysis concerning the separation of the left spectrum in the Federal Republic of Germany, cf. also J. Gerber, *Nie wieder Deutschland? Die Linke im Zusammenbruch des “realen Sozialismus”* (Freiburg: ça ira, 2010); P. Nowak, *Kurze Geschichte der Antisemitismusdebatte in der deutschen Linken* (Münster: edition assemblage, 2013).

64 These developments of reorientation within certain left-wing groups were already anticipated through the debates about the Lebanon War in 1982 but also through the impulses originating from the “historians quarrel” and the Jenninger speech (cf. Haury, “Der neue Antisemitismusstreit der deutschen Linken,” 145). However, in the 1990s—not so far from the inception of the Gulf War—the commencing Oslo peace process must be mentioned, which, in its turn, led to a shift and easing of the dispute over Israel among the Left. Yet, this period of calm rapidly ended with the outbreak of the Second Intifada in September 2000 (cf. Kloke, “Antizionismus und Antisemitismus als Weltanschauung?,” 180).

within its own ranks and publicly discussed. The *Antideutschen* considered antisemitism in Germany to be widespread and of eliminatory character

since the “Jew” as bogeyman shows a constitutive meaning for the ideological construction of the “German people.” The extermination of the Jews by the Nazis, thus, has to be considered as the negative climax of both the civil society as well as the “German nation.”<sup>65</sup>

Auschwitz is no longer regarded as merely the crimes of National Socialism but particularly as *the* German crime. Additionally, the *Antideutschen* clearly rejected the reunification of Germany due to a threatening hegemonic positioning of the German state. Members of this group comprehend Zionism as response to the European antisemitism and defend, amongst others, the existence of Israel as a crucial shelter for all Jews.<sup>66</sup> This conflict, among the Left, was about

the relation toward Israel and the Mideast conflict, the meaning of the Shoah for the present, attitudes toward antisemitism, nationalism and the German past, the question of anti-capitalism and anti-imperialism, the relation toward war and peace and the relevance of international solidarity. It is, to sum it up, about the identity of the radical left in Germany after 1989.<sup>67</sup>

The critical reflection on left-wing antisemitism that started in the 1990s admittedly did not lead to the termination of anti-Zionist distortions of Israel. During the Second Intifada (2000) and the Lebanon War in 2006 (and 2009), antisemitic stereotypes were reproduced again through the loop of anti-Zionism. Newspapers such as *junge Welt*, *Neues Deutschland*, and *Unsere Zeit* reconfirmed a continuous virulence of anti-imperialist, anti-Zionist patterns of the (radical to the extreme) left.<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> Haury, “*Der neue Antisemitismusstreit der deutschen Linken*,” 152.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. M.W. Kloke, “Israel: Alptraum der deutschen Linken?” in *Exklusive Solidarität: Linker Antisemitismus in Deutschland. Vom Idealismus zur Antiglobalisierungsbewegung*, ed. M. Brosch et al. (Berlin: Metropol, 2007), 316. Imhoff could prove antisemitism among the readers of left-oriented media. Cf. M. E. Imhoff, *Antisemitismus in der Linken: Ergebnisse einer quantitativen Befragung* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2011). Giesel examined antisemitism in the course of a qualitative corpus analysis of reader comments from the newspapers *New Germany* (*Neues Deutschland*) and *taz*; cf. L. Giesel, “‘Kriegstreibende Zionisten’ und ‘Pro-Israel-Lobby’: Verbaler Antisemitismus in Kommentartexten des Neuen Deutschlands und der *taz*,” in *Gebildeter Antisemitismus: Eine Herausforderung für Politik und Zivilgesellschaft*, ed. M. Schwarz-Friesel (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2015). Such analyses prove a continuous presence of left-wing antisemitism.

Looking at rather left-oriented media within the German mainstream illustrates that Israel-related antisemitism in this milieu also does not represent an individual case (and cannot at all—as often suggested—be considered a taboo). Right after its foundation in 1948, the renowned publisher of the newspaper *Die Zeit*, Marion Gräfin Dönhoff, already classified Israel as comparable with Nazi Germany.<sup>69</sup> Also Rudolf Augstein drew this analogy in his *Spiegel* articles of the 1970s and 1990s.<sup>70</sup> Jakob Augstein, stepson of the popular publisher and editor-in-chief of the left-liberal *Freitag*, in recent history continued this tradition in his *Spiegel* columns by repeatedly comparing Israel with Nazi Germany (“Gaza is a prison. A camp.”<sup>71</sup>). Furthermore, J. Augstein equated the Jewish state with the South African apartheid regime,<sup>72</sup> alleged intentional killing of Palestinian children by the Israeli army and claimed that ultra-orthodox Jews would “follow the law of revenge.”<sup>73</sup> The journalist also reproduced world conspiracy ideologies (“[...] the Netanyahu government keeps the whole world on a leash with rising war hymns,” “[...] the whole world as a hostage [...]”<sup>74</sup>; “when Jerusalem calls, Berlin obeys its will.”<sup>75</sup> The fact that a major part of German journalists defended Jakob Augstein against the allegations antisemitism of the Wiesenthal Center—despite his obviously demonizing statements—confirms the social

---

69 “One can only hope what the shock regarding the death of Count Bernadotte means for the responsible men of the government of Israel, that they pause at least for a moment and recognize appalled how far they have already come on their way that has led another nation into the abyss.” M. Gräfin Dönhoff, “Völkischer Ordensstaat Israel,” *Die Zeit*, September 23, 1948, <http://www.zeit.de/1948/39/voelkischer-ordensstaat-israel>.

70 “It must not be the same people, that seek to engrain the remembrance of the platform in Auschwitz forever into the memory of us and the ones that come after us [...], to act as the ‘master race’ toward the Palestinians.” R. Augstein, “Ist Israel noch zu retten?” *Der Spiegel*, October 15, 1990, <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-13502118.html>.

71 J. Augstein, “Gesetz der Rache,” *Spiegel Online*, November 19, 2012, <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/jakob-augstein-ueber-israels-gaza-offensive-gesetz-der-rache-a-868015.html>.

72 Cf. S. Beyer and E. Follath, “Spiegel-Streitgespräch. Was ist Antisemitismus?” *Spiegel Online*, January 14, 2013, <https://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-90535659.html>.

73 Augstein, “Gesetz der Rache”; cf. also P. Kuhn, “Dämonisierung mit dem Ziel der Delegitimierung,” *Die Welt*, January 16, 2013, <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article112787522/Daemonisierung-mit-dem-Ziel-der-Delegitimierung.html>; M. Küntzel, “Die Jakob Augstein-Debatte: Eine verpasste Chance,” in *Gebildeter Antisemitismus: Eine Herausforderung für Politik und Zivilgesellschaft*, ed. M. Schwarz-Friesel (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2015), 53–74.

74 J. Augstein, “Es musste gesagt werden,” *Spiegel Online*, April 6, 2012, <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/jakob-augstein-ueber-guenter-grass-israel-gedicht-a-826163.html>.

75 J. Augstein, “Die deutsche Atom-Lüge,” *Spiegel Online*, June 4, 2012, <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/u-boote-fuer-israel-wie-deutschland-die-sicherheit-in-nahost-gefaehrdet-a-836816.html>.

acceptability of antisemitic slurs within the German mainstream discourse. The central argument in the debates was that Augstein would represent critical, left-wing journalism and, therefore, his articles cannot represent expressions of antisemitic thinking. This debate exemplifies “a removal of taboos, a rationalization and a legitimization of antisemitic stereotypes.”<sup>76</sup> The Augstein case demonstrates that the conditions for such statements change if they are expressed by left-liberal elites—positively connoted and chosen opinion leaders of the German political mainstream.<sup>77</sup>

The highest circulating German daily newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* also reproduced antisemitic stereotypes in the form of illustrations. Two scandals took place in 2013 and 2014: in one of them, the newspaper published a cartoon that depicts Israel as a monster, who is served by a maid representing Germany.<sup>78</sup> In the second case, they released a cartoon showing Facebook founder, Mark Zuckerberg, as an octopus with a hooked nose, incorporating the application WhatsApp.<sup>79</sup> Even if such cartoons were rejected as beyond the antisemitic paradigm, its presence nonetheless demonstrates once more that antisemitic imagery can be observed in left-liberal mainstream media as soon as journalists refer to Israel and/or Jewish persons. Because of their potential impact on opinions within wider mainstream society, the presence of such images is even more dangerous in this media spectrum than in decidedly left-wing press.<sup>80</sup>

---

76 L. Rensmann, “Antisemitismus und Israelfeindschaft,” in *Deutschland, die Juden und der Staat Israel: Eine politische Bestandsaufnahme*, ed. O. Glöckner and J. H. Schoeps (Hildesheim: Olms, 2016), 277.

77 For a detailed analysis of the statements of J. Augstein and the thereby triggered debate, see M. Küntzel, “Die Jakob Augstein-Debatte,” and especially L. Betzler and M. Glittenberg, *Antisemitismus im deutschen Mediendiskurs: Eine Analyse des Falls Jakob Augstein* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2015).

78 Cf. F. Augstein, “Ist ein gehörntes Monster antisemitisch?” *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, July 2, 2013, <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/bebilderung-der-seite-das-politische-buch-ist-ein-gehoerntes-gieriges-monster-antisemitisch-1.1710600>; “Antisemitismus-Vorwurf wegen Karikatur: ‘SZ’ bezeichnet Veröffentlichung als ‘Fehler,’” *Spiegel Online*, July 3, 2013, <http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/gesellschaft/antisemitismus-vorwurf-sueddeutsche-nennt-veroeffentlichung-fehler-a-909299.html>.

79 Cf. P. Gensing, “SZ macht Facebook zu Jewbook,” *Publikative.org*, 2014, accessed November 12, 2017, <https://publikative.org/2014/02/25/sz-macht-facebook-zu-jewbook/>; “Mark-Zuckerberg-Karikatur: Antisemitismus-Vorwurf gegen ‘Süddeutsche Zeitung,’” *Spiegel Online*, February 25, 2014, <http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/gesellschaft/mark-zuckerberg-wiesenthal-center-kritisiert-su-eddeutsche-fuer-antisemitische-karikatur-a-955613.html>.

80 For a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the image of Israel within the German mainstream media, see R. Beyer, *Mit deutschem Blick: Israelkritische Berichterstattung über den Nahostkonflikt in der bundesrepublikanischen Qualitätspresse. Eine Inhaltsanalyse mit linguistischem*

On the political level, the behavior of politicians from the party DIE LINKE (The Left) have provoked various scandals in the past twenty-five years, leading to debates on antisemitism in the party.<sup>81</sup> Related incidents prove that certain parts of the party are still dominated by anti-Zionist attitudes. For instance, the politician Hermann Dierkes from the city of Duisburg repeatedly called for a boycott of Israel; the left-wing city councillor Erika Zemaitis rejected the subsidization of the reconstruction of the synagogue in Herford that was destroyed by the Nazi regime; furthermore, in 2008, eleven delegates of the party were absent during the vote concerning a proposal to fight antisemitism (shortly before the seventieth anniversary of the *Reichspogromnacht*), because they conceptually equated solidarity with Israel with a form of taboo to criticize Israeli politics.<sup>82</sup> The politicians Annette Groth, Inge Höger, and Norman Paech participated in the so-called *Gaza flotilla raid* in May 2010. The legitimization of the latter was questioned by large parts of the media. Relativization of terror and fraternization with Hamas and Hezbollah could be observed at demonstrations initiated by the party, in which left-wing and Islamist groups showed their hostility toward Israel together with extreme right-wing actors.<sup>83</sup> Former head of the DIE LINKE parliamentary group, Oskar Lafontaine (as well as Norman Paech), repeatedly expressed understanding for the Iranian nuclear program.<sup>84</sup>

---

*Schwerpunkt von Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung und Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung, Die Welt und Welt am Sonntag, Nürnberger Nachrichten, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Die Zeit, Focus und Der Spiegel* (Bremen: edition lumière, 2016). For a qualitative analysis of articles and readers' comments in the left liberal newspaper *Die Zeit*, see M. J. Becker, *Analogien der "Vergangenheitsbewältigung": Antisraelische Projektionen in Lesercommentaren der Zeit und des Guardian* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2018); trans. *ibid.*, *Antisemitism in Reader Comments: Analogies for Reckoning with the Past* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021).

**81** For a detailed overview of antisemitism in the party DIE LINKE, which constitutes the successor party of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands* [SED]), cf. Kloke, "Antisemitismus in der Linkspartei"; S. Salzborn, "Die Linkspartei hat ein Antisemitismusproblem," *Die Welt*, June 8, 2010, <http://www.welt.de/debatte/kommentare/article7957984/Die-Linkspartei-hat-ein-Antisemitismusproblem.html>; S. Salzborn and S. Voigt, "Antisemiten als Koalitionspartner? Die Linkspartei zwischen antizionistischem Antisemitismus und dem Streben nach Regierungsfähigkeit," *Zeitschrift für Politik* 3, no. 58 (2011): 290–309.

**82** Cf. Kloke, "Antisemitismus in der Linkspartei," 162.

**83** Cf. Haury, "Der neue Antisemitismusstreit der deutschen Linken," 151. For statements relativizing terror of DIE LINKE politician Christine Buchholz cf. Kloke, "Antisemitismus in der Linkspartei," 160.

**84** Cf. *ibid.*, 161, including corresponding statements of the Rosa Luxemburg foundation). Obviously, one shall, at this point, not forget the commitment of politicians from the party DIE LINKE such as Petra Pau and Gregor Gysi. Kloke summarized these accomplishments (cf. *ibid.*, 169).

Yet, not only within DIE LINKE, but also among other left-wing, autonomous movements and non-governmental organizations, one can find the tendency to treat antisemitism as merely a historically relevant phenomenon and consequently—intentionally or not—justify demonization as well as the delegitimization of Israel, since criticism of the latter cannot possibly constitute antisemitism.<sup>85</sup>

During the events of the now irrelevant anti-globalization movement *attac* and the Trotskyist group *Linksruck*, Israel was repeatedly characterized as “fascist.” Here again, the “heroic fighters of the intifada”<sup>86</sup> were praised and supporters called for the boycott of Israeli goods.<sup>87</sup> Through the often-used comparison between international financial capital and national community/-ies, economic processes are simplified; furthermore, such schemes activate patterns that are mainly known from the right-wing nationalism or *voelkisch* anti-capitalism.<sup>88</sup> This way

anti-Zionist attitudes within the anti-globalization movement as well as in the peace movement provide ideological points of reference for anti-Israeli argumentation from the extreme right or Islamist side.<sup>89</sup>

In summary, it can be stated that anti-Zionism, justified by a simplified anti-imperialist worldview, has been constantly expressed in the GDR and in left-wing milieus of the FRG, in particular since 1967. Leftist groups have been characterizing Israel as the ultimate evil, as the henchman or even as the secret string-pulling puppet master of US imperialism. They reproduce antisemitic stereo-

---

**85** Yet, statistical surveys such as the renowned FES-Mitte-Study from 2016 show that the presence of antisemitism in the left-wing milieu has to be classified according to the so-called political center and the right-wing spectrum: “Classic antisemitism exhibits an almost linear increase (extreme left-wing 0%, rather left-wing 1%, center 7%, rather right-wing 14%, extreme right-wing 16%). The same holds true for Israel-related antisemitism (extreme left-wing 14%, rather left-wing 16%, center 23%, rather right-wing 43%, extreme right-wing 46%)” (A. Zick, B. Küpper and D. Krause, *Gespaltene Mitte—Feindselige Zustände: Rechtsextreme Einstellungen in Deutschland 2016*, ed. for the Friedrich Ebert Foundation by R. Melzer (Bonn: Dietz, 2016), 64).

**86** The fraternization with Palestinians can even go so far that some anti-imperialists see Hamas as a partner and suicide bombers as martyrs that are fighting a justified battle (see statements in *Linksruck*, quoted in Haury, “Der neue Antisemitismusstreit der deutschen Linken,” 143 and 148).

**87** *Ibid.*, 155.

**88** *Ibid.*, 156.

**89** Stein, *Zwischen Antisemitismus und Israelkritik*, 91; cf. also T.-C. Heger, “Die Linke und der Jihad: Ideologische Schnittstellen zwischen der extremen Linken und dem sunnitischen Islamismus” (MA thesis, Universität Potsdam, 2007).

types, projective-exonerative analogies, and thereby demonize and delegitimize the Jewish state. The linguistic patterns of repertoire used to devalue Israel and, consequently, Jews, will be illustrated in the following part of the article.

## 4 Patterns of Language Use and their Communicative Functions

As explained in part 3 of this article, anti-Zionism functions as a pivotal ideological justification as well as the carrier of antisemitism on the Left. This function of anti-Zionism gets commonly characterized through the metaphor of a “Trojan horse.”<sup>90</sup> Thus, antisemitism (not only) on the Left can be communicated in an “honorable”<sup>91</sup> way, that is, as a verbal offense against injustice, oppression, and exploitation.

As it was mentioned before, anti-Zionism is based on an anti-imperialist worldview that is determined by categories such as *Manichaeism*, *personification*, *conspiracy theories*, and an *extreme reference to “the people.”*<sup>92</sup> Furthermore, I have added the following categories into Haury’s synopsis: *stereotypes*,<sup>93</sup> *Nazi comparisons* as well as *further (partly historical) comparisons.*<sup>94</sup> All these categories constitute the anti-Zionist repertoire of demonization. Due to shortage of space, only a few examples of the complex patterns of language use will be taken into consideration. These, in their respective turns, constitute implicit forms of anti-Israel demonization.<sup>95</sup>

Speakers construct the Middle Eastern conflict as a conflict in which—through a recourse to an anti-imperialist scheme (representing a Manichaean

---

<sup>90</sup> Kloke, “Zum Antisemitismus in der deutschen Linken.”

<sup>91</sup> Améry, “Der ehrbare Antisemitismus,” 131; cf. also M. Gallner, “Like a Cloud Contains a Storm: Jean Améry’s Critique of Anti-Zionism,” *Fathom*, Autumn 2016, <http://fathomjournal.org/like-a-cloud-contains-a-storm-jean-amerys-critique-of-anti-zionism>.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Haury, “Die ideologischen Grundlagen.”

<sup>93</sup> The allegation of a Jewish world conspiracy constitutes only one of many antisemitic stereotypes.

<sup>94</sup> The categories of Manichaeism and personification constitute parameters that can be completed with stereotypical meaning.

<sup>95</sup> For a (linguistic) approach regarding implicit forms of Israel-related antisemitism inter alia within political mainstream cf. Becker, *Antisemitism in Reader Comments*; L. Giesel, “NS-Vergleiche und NS-Metaphern im öffentlichen Kommunikationsraum sowie in E-Mails an die Israelische Botschaft und den Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland: Korpuslinguistische Perspektiven auf konzeptuelle, strukturelle und funktionale Charakteristika” (PhD diss., Technische Universität Berlin, 2017); Schwarz-Friesel and Reinharz, *Inside the Antisemitic Mind*.

worldview)—Palestinians play the role of the *weak, the non-white oppressed, in need of help, who are fighting for their legitimate goals*; Israel, though, plays the role of an *oppressive, omnipotent, and illegitimate power*.<sup>96</sup>

- (1) The Palestinian resistance movement call to battle against the occupier (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, reader's comment, December 7, 2017)

At the same time, commenters regard the presence of Palestinian life in the Middle East as something *natural*, while Israeli existence, however, is regarded as something *artificial*.<sup>97</sup>

- (2) My opinion is that the Jewish claim to Palestine doesn't have a rational basis. The Arabs have lived in that region all along and so they are of course entitled to live there today. Their leaders have my full support to fight off the planned Zionist takeover! (*taz*, reader's comment, December 7, 2017)

It is striking that commenters often refer solely to the (usually demonized) *Israeli Prime Minister* or to the *Zionist state* but not to the *Israeli populace*.<sup>98</sup> The usage of the category *extreme reference to the people or humans vis-à-vis Israelis* would demand the concession that Jewish citizens also have the right to exist in the Middle East. Writers acknowledge group-related rights only in reference to the Palestinian side. The avoidance of such a reference to the Israeli populace also leads to the case where Jews are conceptually sidelined. Hence, left speak-

---

<sup>96</sup> Cf. M. Schwarz-Friesel, "Explizite und implizite Formen des Verbal-Antisemitismus in aktuellen Texten der regionalen und überregionalen Presse (2002–2010) und ihr Einfluss auf den alltäglichen Sprachgebrauch," in *Judenfeindschaft und Antisemitismus in der deutschen Presse über fünf Jahrhunderte: Erscheinungsformen, Rezeption, Debatte und Gegenwehr*, ed. M. Nagel and M. Zimmermann (Bremen: Edition Lumière, 2013), 1005. The examples presented in this section originate from texts by Kloke ("Antisemitismus in der Linkspartei,") and Becker (*Antisemitism in Reader Comments*) as well as from a current corpus of web comments set up by the author of the article. The latter consists of reader's comments of left-wing oriented media that relate to the decision of US president Donald Trump on December 6, 2017 to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel (these are roughly 300 readers' comments on *Süddeutsche Zeitung* [Facebook presence of the newspaper], *taz*, and *Die Zeit*).

<sup>97</sup> This outlook corresponds to the typical right-wing construction of an autochthonous German people on the one side and the international Jewry which is incapable of nation building on the other side (cf. Haury, "Der neue Antisemitismusstreit der deutschen Linken," 150).

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

ers can—through the loop of the “legitimizing excuse ‘Israel’”<sup>99</sup>—demonize the reference group (partly in striking an aggressive tone), without being potentially confronted with the reproach of reproducing misanthropic, in this particular case, antisemitic hate speech, which of course would not be compatible within a leftist self-conception.<sup>100</sup>

In parallel with this abstractly avoiding reference to Israeli citizens in the anti-Zionist discourse, speakers personify the concept of “the enemy, Israel.” As indicated above, the personification of Israel often introduces the reproduction of antisemitic stereotypes. According to this observation, the commenter in the next example, a journalist of the *junge Welt*, reproduces the stereotype of vengefulness as a characteristic of the personified Israel:

- (3) With old Testament right, Israel cracks down on the Palestinian rebellion in the occupied territories. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. And that is clearly an understatement. An eye for hundred eyes, and a tooth for hundred teeth, that’s the invoice.<sup>101</sup>

Next to the stereotype of vengefulness, writers in the left milieu frequently refer to greed for money. They can utter such an allegation explicitly, when they speak of “greedy Jews”; or implicitly coded, when they speak of “the finance capital” or “the Wall Street.”<sup>102</sup> In the present-day discourse, this stereotype in its actualized form gets transferred onto Israel—a country that allegedly is greedy for land:

---

<sup>99</sup> Y. Pallade, “Aktueller Antisemitismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland,” in *Neues vom Antisemitismus: Zustände in Deutschland*, ed. H. Helas, D. Rubisch and R. Zilkenat (Dietz: Berlin, 2008), 105.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. Stein, *Zwischen Antisemitismus und Israelkritik*, 31.

As soon as speakers reproach the Israeli ability to put up with a fight, they direct that reproach not only toward Israelis, but also toward Jews in the commentator’s own country (and worldwide). Through the oscillating usage of the lexemes *Zionists*, *Israelis*, and *Jews* (which are understood as synonyms), they (unsubstantially) equate these groups. The first ones are often explicitly named, the latter one, however, only implied. In the frame of such a perspective, German Jews get forced in a position of justification pressure as soon as the Middle Eastern conflict escalates again.

<sup>101</sup> Pirker 2000 in *junge Welt*, quoted in Kloke, “Antisemitismus in der Linkspartei,” 159.

<sup>102</sup> Stein, *Zwischen Antisemitismus und Israelkritik*, 90. In the context of the *Occupy Wall Street* movement related reminiscences are articulated as well. Here, references to *Rothschild* (as a symbol of Jewish influence) are rarely made, instead such an explicit reference were replaced by naming *Goldman Sachs* and a sinister *East Coast lobby* operating behind the scenes (for an analysis of such paraphrases cf. Schwarz-Friesel and Reinharz, *Inside the Antisemitic Mind*, 10). Hence, an imaginary is chosen that is accessible to an antisemitic interpretation of the world. While criticizing banks and economic sectors, speakers also use locust metaphors (which represents a pattern with a long history) and activate a scenario of menace, in which “lo-

- (4) Historically, Jerusalem belongs to the Palestinians. In 1947, there was a clear arrangement of who gets what. But for Israel that wasn't enough. It wants more and more. (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, reader's comment, December 6, 2017)

In the context of this stereotype, writers often express world conspiracy theories. In the twentieth century, related theories entered the left discourse through the allegations such as “Zionist multimillionaires who [...] repeatedly meet at private conferences in order to support Israel's aggression.”<sup>103</sup> Today, such constructions also appear in moderate left-liberal media (cf. e.g., Jakob Augstein's columns presented in part 3 of this article). In the following extract, a reader of *Süddeutsche Zeitung* accuses Israel (again personified) of destabilizing the region of the Mideast and of being responsible for the refugee crisis (and therefore for the current destabilization of the European Union and Germany):

- (5) Israel displaces people, those flee by the millions to other countries. Consequently, these countries got destabilized and through Zionist/imperialist cover-ups pushed into a civil war—even more people have to flee, this time towards Europe, and lo and behold, the number of Muslims in Europe raises disproportionately. Basically, only a Zionist conspiracy in order to weaken Europe, especially the evil Germany. (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, reader's comment, December 6, 2017)

Furthermore, writers in the present-day discourse on the Mideast conflict reproduce stereotypes of deceit and hypocrisy and—in conjunction with these—the instrumentalization of antisemitism:

- (6) Israel claims, Hamas would have “killed” an Israeli soldier and start to shoot at Palestinian territory. (*Die Zeit*, reader's comment, August 3, 2014)
- (7) While other countries deal with their (admittedly often bigger) conflicts by force, Israel categorically whines, screams, and wails, emphasizing that they'd have the right, because of antisemitism (*Die Zeit*, reader's comment, August 4, 2014)
- (8) Israel's behavior [is] comparable with the one of a beaten child [...]. The Jews have suffered for centuries, and now they themselves spread misery in their self-created ghetto. (*Die Zeit*, reader's comment, November 29, 2012)

The latter comment shows the paternalistic allegation that Israel would behave like a child and therefore is—in the political arena—backward. Additionally, the commenter strikingly uses the lexeme “ghetto.” This is an allusion to the Nazi

---

custs” pounce on defenseless consumers, destroy economic states, and in fact, going as far plunging the whole states into chaos.

<sup>103</sup> T. Haury, “Von der linken Kritik des Zionismus zum antisemitischen Antizionismus von links,” in *Antisemitismus: Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. S. Salzborn (Giessen: NBKK, 2004), 150.

crimes and therefore an implicit comparison between Israel and Nazi Germany.<sup>104</sup> As I have already pointed out in part 3 of this article, ever since the German left (i.e., in both German states, GDR and FRG) has express(ed) Nazi comparisons on a regular basis. Such comparisons can be realized explicitly by word play like *Nazisrael* or *Zionazis*.<sup>105</sup> In the previous section, I also demonstrated indirect forms of exonerative antisemitism, not least with the aid of articles written by well-established journalists such as Gräfin Dönhoff and Rudolf and Jakob Augstein.

Instead of listing examples of my linguistic data, in which writers utter Nazi comparisons, I would rather refer to the three communicative functions<sup>106</sup> that accompany Nazi comparisons, which constitute the essence of exonerative antisemitism: Through the use of Nazi comparisons, Israel gets *demonized* (in the course of a so-called perpetrator-victim-reversal); beyond that, Nazi crimes are deprived of their singular status and consequently *relativized*. If the writer is a member of the German in-group (i.e., that of the former perpetrators), the relativization of Nazi crimes is accompanied by an unburdening of guilt from the writer's own national community. Hence, Israel serves as a projection surface for characteristics that are opposed to a positive collective self-image (the Holocaust is, for many Germans, the largest impediment to this sort of affinity with national identity). The unburdening of guilt allows a discursive overcoming of the historically bad conscience that prevents individuals from having a sincere identification with their national identity.<sup>107</sup> Within the course of Nazi comparisons (as a form of Israel-related demonization) the above-mentioned category of an *extreme reference to the people* gets activated. This is similar to the Manichean scheme referred to at the beginning of this section, where interpreting the world images of what is good and what is bad, gets reinforced. Yet, in this case the pos-

---

**104** Cf. Becker, *Antisemitism in Reader Comments*; Giesel, *NS-Vergleiche und NS-Metaphern*. It is an implicit Nazi comparison, because the commenter activates the Nazi scenario only through using the lexeme "ghetto." An explicit Nazi comparison would mean: Israel is/acts like Nazi Germany (*X is like Y*).

**105** Cf. Kloke, *Israel und die deutsche Linke*, 171; Rensmann, *Demokratie und Judenbild*, 315.

**106** When I use the term (*communicative*) *function(s)*, I refer to deductions that can be inferred out of the given information regarding the proportion of the two correlated issues. Readers can, but they don't have to be able to infer these potential deductions. This means that the actual understanding of the analogies can diverge subjectively. Questions, such as whether the writer utters a comparison intentionally, or if readers can entirely understand the comparison, do not, however, affect the functions of analogies in that context. For a detailed analysis of functions, inter alia, of Nazi comparisons cf. Becker, *Antisemitism in Reader Comments*.

**107** Cf. Rensmann, *Demokratie und Judenbild*, 73; Globisch, *Radikaler Antisemitismus*, 43.

itive image does not affect other (per se positively evaluated) peoples but specifically the *own people of the Germans*.

The reconstruction of a need for unburdening of guilt of the German ingroup that accompanies Nazi comparisons is rather striking in the context of leftist groups. After all, the left internationalism takes nationhood as an anachronistic identity promoting concept. As a result, leftist groups think of themselves as being free of national sentiment and, thus, of needs for exoneration and national self-identification.<sup>108</sup> The frequent, almost obsessive presence of Nazi comparisons demonstrates, however, overlaps between different political camps in Germany in relation to their needs as soon as the Nazi past and antisemitism become the issue.

From the above-mentioned Manichean worldview predefined, the *relation to the people* also gets activated or expanded via a positive relation of leftist groups to national liberation movements (with regard to anti-Zionist utterances, positive images are projected onto Palestinians).<sup>109</sup> Leftist anti-Zionists express such a perspective whilst, at the same time, vehemently rejecting the existence of the Israeli state. This double standard finally results in a delegitimization of Israel:<sup>110</sup>

(9) [...] in the course of the years we started to resolutely [question the right to exist of the apartheid state of Israel].<sup>111</sup>

Such a double standard can, however, also occur when writers apply especially high moral standards to Israel. This is characteristic for anti-Israeli manifestations coming from the left-liberal camp: writers take the view that Israelis and/or Jews would not have learned anything from the past persecution of Jews. On the other side, there are the German (non-Jewish) writers who—not least because of their presumed historical sensitivity (that they tend to express, for example, via Nazi comparisons)—would have learned from the (Nazi) past and therefore hold an exemplary role. Accordingly, they perceive themselves as morally superior to Israelis and/or Jews. Double standards come into effect

---

**108** A. Ludwig shows that the category *nation* plays a much bigger role in the thinking of the New Left than it might at first sight appear. Cf. A. Ludwig, *Neue oder Deutsche Linke? Nation und Nationalismus im Denken von Linken und Grünen* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1995); cf. Haury, *Antisemitismus von links*, 154; Stein, *Zwischen Antisemitismus und Israelkritik*, 76.

**109** Cf. part 3 and Kloke, “Zum Antisemitismus in der deutschen Linken.”

**110** A delegitimization of the Israeli state obviously appears in the course of each category presented in this article that as a whole constitutes the anti-Zionist repertoire of demonization.

**111** Pirker 2013 in *junge Welt*, quoted in Kloke, “Antisemitismus in der Linkspartei,” 160.

when writers reproach Israel for defending itself against terrorism and gratuitously suggest pacifism, indulgence, and de-escalation instead.

In the example introduced above from the *junge Welt*, the reference to Israel as an “apartheid state” is of interest. This is one among those historical comparisons through which anti-Zionism is characterized in left-wing milieus. The reference to apartheid shows Israel as a state with a fully established, institutionalized segregation between Israelis and Palestinians.<sup>112</sup> The above-mentioned functions of demonization (of Israel) and relativization (of racist crimes of the South African apartheid regime) can be further witnessed here.<sup>113</sup>

The apartheid regime represents a product of European colonialism that in its late form is shaped by (justifying) racist positions. A demonization of Israel through comparisons to apartheid, colonialism, expansionism, militarism, and chauvinism represent standardized distortions of Israel and of Zionism in leftist contexts.<sup>114</sup> In the course of historical comparisons (next to the one of apartheid especially with the European colonial empires in mind), in which European crimes are projected onto Israel, writers reinforce the Manichean worldview of the anti-imperialist anti-Zionism and consequently justify their own rejection of the Israeli state.<sup>115</sup>

A central concomitant phenomenon of anti-imperialist anti-Zionism is the one of anti-Americanism. The rejection of the US, which works as the prototype of capitalism and imperialism per se, gets interlinked with anti-Zionist conceptualizations that are unambiguously pre-defined by conspiracy-theory explanations and a clear idea of good and bad.<sup>116</sup> In the present-day discourse, such a

---

**112** Cf. Schwarz-Friesel and Reinharz, *Inside the Antisemitic Mind*, 164; cf. also B. Pogrund, *Drawing Fire: Investigating the Accusations of Apartheid in Israel* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014) and B. Pogrund, “Israel has many Injustices: But it is not an Apartheid State,” *Guardian*, May 22, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/may/22/israel-injustices-not-apartheid-state>.

**113** Cf. Becker, *Antisemitism in Reader Comments*.

**114** Cf. *ibid.*; Kloke, “Zum Antisemitismus in der deutschen Linken.”

**115** The advantage of such demonizing (and relativizing of historical crimes) comparisons is that speakers devalue and ostracize Israel without using antisemitic stereotypes. They therefore represent a form of anti-Zionist expressions that leftist speakers can utter without being labelled as antisemitic (cf. Becker, *Antisemitism in Reader Comments*).

**116** Cf. Rensmann, *Demokratie und Judenbild*, 304. According to Markovits, fear of and criticism regarding capitalist modernity are the unifying elements that interconnect antisemitism and anti-Americanism. Since the mid-nineteenth century, American Jews and the USA have been depicted as a symbol of modernity, “motivated by money, greedy, metropolitan, universalistic, individualistic [...]” A. S. Markovits, *Amerika, dich haßt sich’s besser: Antiamerikanismus und Antisemitismus in Europa* (Hamburg: Konkret Literatur Verlag, 2004), 216; cf. also A. S. Markovits, *Uncouth Nation: Why Europe Dislikes America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

conceptualization gets conveyed in the idea of the “Wall Street as the worldwide center of power of the Jewish finance capital.”<sup>117</sup> In relation to Israel, an anti-American resentment is expressed when (as stated in part 3) writers depict the Israeli state as a “bridgehead” or “spearhead”<sup>118</sup> or as the “agency of American imperialism”<sup>119</sup> in the Middle East. Writers also allege a Jewish-Zionist control over the US (or the US president) as soon as the US government makes a decision in favor of Israeli interests:

- (10) It is Payday for Trump, he has to act and this is what he did. The Jewish-Zionist donors take their toll. And it doesn't matter to him if the region [of the Mideast] burns. (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, reader's comment, December 7, 2017)

Frequent allegations of an Israeli-US-American plot demonstrate the compatibility of antisemitism and anti-Americanism within the frame of an anti-imperialist worldview.

Patterns of language use are shaped by the motifs and ideological background of writers. They can convey their conceptualizations introduced above in an explicit manner, which is often the case, when it comes to utterances of the radical left. Hence, writers use superlative (“the worst dictatorship in the world,” “one of the most violent and militarized societies in the world”)<sup>120</sup> and request the destruction of Israel.

Moderate representatives of a left-minded thinking, however, can convey Israel-related demonization implicitly (inter alia via rhetorical questions, advices, admonitions) and/or embedded into socially acceptable patterns of argumentation.<sup>121</sup> Hence, instead of radical claims to destroy Israel, writers propose a secularization of Israel and/or the birth of a multi-ethnic state. Yet, with the aid of knowledge regarding the high degree of destructive antisemitism within certain contemporary Muslim communities (not only) in the Middle East, readers can discern that both speech acts—aggressive request as well as *constructive* advice—would lead to the same consequences for Jewish life in the Middle East. The advantage of the second variant, of course, is that due to its subtle nature, it is accessible in debates of the political mainstream. The examples shown in parts 3 and 4 of this article, however, prove that (not least because of the anonymity guaranteed by the internet) an implicit and/or elaborate nature even in

---

117 Rensmann, *Demokratie und Judenbild*, 309.

118 Haury, “Der neue Antisemitismusstreit der deutschen Linken,” 147.

119 Haury, *Antisemitismus von links*, 442.

120 Quoted in Haury, “Der neue Antisemitismusstreit der deutschen Linken,” 147.

121 Cf. Schwarz-Friesel and Reinharz, *Inside the Antisemitic Mind*, 276.

left-liberal milieus, and therefore in the mainstream, are no longer unconditional requirements for the expression of antisemitic attitudes—such processes might redeem explicit verbal antisemitism from its presence as a phenomenon of marginal groups.

## 5 Conclusion and Outlook

In both East and West Germany anti-Zionism—justified by an anti-imperialist worldview—was established at an early stage, especially after 1967. This ideology represents a simplistic interpretation of the world, in which Israel always plays the role of the ultimate evil; via projective-exonerating analogies, writers additionally depict the Jewish state as a return of German and/or European crimes as well as a partner of the repelled US-imperialism. In the course of this role assignment, which is embedded in an unequivocal black-and-white scenario, writers can (among other forms of demonization) transfer antisemitic stereotypes onto Israel.

The patterns described lead us to numerous contradictions and moral convictions within a leftist world view, which representatives of the related milieus otherwise obviously avoid or do not anticipate. These include: (1) degradation and ostracism of a certain group that are (2) accompanied by the reproduction of antisemitic stereotypes; (3) the relativization of crimes in the German and European past through Nazi and other historical comparisons; (4) as a consequence of such a relativization (in case of Nazi comparisons), an unburdening of the German national in-group and thus a strengthening of national self-images of Germans; (5) no matter if the comparisons are related to the German, the Palestinian or other peoples (that are depicted as oppressed)—comparisons of that kind presume an almost uncritical-affirmative relation to the concept of *the people*.

On the surface and in spite of such contradictions, one can speak of an attractiveness of anti-Zionism that arises out of its “rhetorical flexibility.”<sup>122</sup> First, writers can renounce familiar patterns of explicit hostility toward Jews. They can claim that their “criticism” only applies to the Jewish state and that is based on humanistic principles<sup>123</sup> and therefore cannot have any antisemitic basis. Furthermore, their criticism is tabooed out of a misunderstood historical responsi-

---

<sup>122</sup> Kloke, “Kein Frieden mit Israel,” 160.

<sup>123</sup> Cf. Améry, “Der ehrbare Antisemitismus,” 131.

bility. Following this line of reasoning, it is not antisemitism, but the reproach of antisemitism against the leftist writers that becomes the scandal.

By means of the anti-Zionist camouflage, antisemitic tropes can infiltrate the mainstream of the German society. Even if explicit anti-Zionist utterances, as they come from the radical left do get problematized, patterns of language use among left-liberal milieus can lead to the point, where antisemitic stereotypes (and other forms of demonization) can reach the status of what is permissible to say. That makes them significantly more dangerous than explicit, traditional forms of verbal Jew-hatred, which only have a limited appeal within mainstream society. Despite linguistic differences, the conceptual basis—the rejection of everything that is Jewish—remains and can become acceptable to the majority. In this respect, the analysis of socially acceptable forms of antisemitic hate speech must be brought to the fore of present-day antisemitism research.

*Matthias J. Becker is a postdoc researcher at the Center for Research on Antisemitism (ZfA) at the Technical University in Berlin. He is also affiliated with CENTRIC, Sheffield Hallam University, and the Vidal Sassoon Center at Hebrew University, Jerusalem. His research lies within the disciplines of (pragma)linguistics, research on prejudice, and internet studies and focuses on the construction of implicit hate speech. In his postdoc project, he examines various forms of antisemitic and racist hate speech in British mainstream media in the context of Brexit.*

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- Augstein, Franziska. "Ist ein gehörntes Monster antisemitisch?" *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, July 2, 2013. <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/bebilderung-der-seite-das-politische-buch-ist-ein-gehoeerntes-gieriges-monster-antisemitisch-1.1710600>.
- Augstein, Jakob. "Die deutsche Atom-Lüge." *Spiegel Online*, June 4, 2012. <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/u-boote-fuer-israel-wie-deutschland-die-sicherheit-in-nahost-gefaehrdet-a-836816.html>.
- Augstein, Jakob. "Es musste gesagt werden." *Spiegel Online*, April 6, 2012. <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/jakob-augstein-ueber-guenter-grass-israel-gedicht-a-826163.html>.
- Augstein, Jakob. "Gesetz der Rache." *Spiegel Online*, November 19, 2012. <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/jakob-augstein-ueber-israels-gaza-offensive-gesetz-der-rache-a-868015.html>.
- Augstein, Rudolf. "Ist Israel noch zu retten?" *Der Spiegel*, October 15, 1990. <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-13502118.html>.

- Beyer, Susanne, and Erich Follath. "Spiegel-Streitgespräch. Was ist Antisemitismus?" *Spiegel Online*, January 14, 2013. <https://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-90535659.html>.
- Gräfin Dönhoff, Marion. "Völkischer Ordensstaat Israel." *Die Zeit*, September 23, 1948. <http://www.zeit.de/1948/39/voelkischer-ordensstaat-israel>.

## Secondary Sources

- Améry, Jean. "Der ehrbare Antisemitismus." In *Werke: Aufsätze zur Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, edited by Stephan Steiner, 7:131–40. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2005 [1969].
- Becker, Matthias J. *Analogien der "Vergangenheitsbewältigung": Antiisraelische Projektionen in Leserkommentaren der Zeit und des Guardian*. Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2018.
- Becker, Matthias J. *Antisemitism in Reader Comments: Analogies for Reckoning with the Past*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021.
- Betzler, Lukas, and Manuel Glittenberg. *Antisemitismus im deutschen Mediendiskurs: Eine Analyse des Falls Jakob Augstein*. Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2015.
- Beyer, Robert. *Mit deutschem Blick: Israelkritische Berichterstattung über den Nahostkonflikt in der bundesrepublikanischen Qualitätspresse. Eine Inhaltsanalyse mit linguistischem Schwerpunkt von Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung und Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung, Die Welt und Welt am Sonntag, Nürnberger Nachrichten, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Die Zeit, Focus und Der Spiegel*. Bremen: edition lumière, 2016.
- Brunkhorst, Hauke. "Die falsch gestellte Frage: War Marx Antisemit?" *Blätter* 8 (2014): 110–18. <https://www.blaetter.de/archiv/jahrgaenge/2014/august/die-falsch-gestellte-frage>.
- Camus, Jean-Yves. "The French Left and Political Islam: Secularism versus the Temptation of an Alliance." *Engage*, 3 (2006). <https://engageonline.wordpress.com/2015/11/04/the-french-left-and-political-islam-secularism-versus-the-temptation-of-an-alliance-jean-yves-camus-engage-journal-issue-3-september-2006>.
- Cesarani, David. *The Left and the Jews: The Jews and the Left*. London: Labour Friends of Israel, 2004.
- Claussen, Detlev. "Versuch über den Antizionismus: Ein Rückblick." In *Antisemitismus: Geschichte, Interessenstruktur, Aktualität*, edited by Gudrun Hentges, Guy Kempfert, and Reinhard. Kühnl, 169–80. Heilbronn: Distel, 1995.
- Edmunds, June. "The Left's Views on Israel. From the Establishment of the Jewish State to the Intifada." PhD diss., London School of Economics and Political Science, 1997.
- Eitz, Thorsten, and Georg Stötzel. *Wörterbuch der "Vergangenheitsbewältigung". Die NS-Vergangenheit im öffentlichen Sprachgebrauch*, vol. 1. Hildesheim: Olms, 2007.
- Eitz, Thorsten, and Georg Stötzel. *Wörterbuch der "Vergangenheitsbewältigung". Die NS-Vergangenheit im öffentlichen Sprachgebrauch*, vol. 2. Hildesheim: Olms, 2009.
- Gallner, Marlene. "Like a Cloud Contains a Storm: Jean Améry's Critique of Anti-Zionism." *Fathom*, Autumn 2016. <http://fathomjournal.org/like-a-cloud-contains-a-storm-jean-amerys-critique-of-anti-zionism>.
- Gensing, Patrick. "SZ macht Facebook zu Jewbook." *Publikative.org*, 2014. Accessed November 12, 2017. <https://publikative.org/2014/02/25/sz-macht-facebook-zu-jewbook>. [No longer available.]

- Gerber, Jan. *Ein Prozess in Prag: Das Volk gegen Rudolf Slánský und Genossen*. Göttingen/Bristol: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016.
- Gerber, Jan. *Nie wieder Deutschland? Die Linke im Zusammenbruch des "realen Sozialismus."* Freiburg: ça ira, 2010.
- Giesel, Linda. "'Kriegstreibende Zionisten' und 'Pro-Israel-Lobby': Verbaler Antisemitismus in Kommentarbeiträgen des *Neuen Deutschlands* und der *Taz*." In *Gebildeter Antisemitismus: Eine Herausforderung für Politik und Zivilgesellschaft*, edited by Monika Schwarz-Friesel, 135–53. Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2015.
- Giesel, Linda. "NS-Vergleiche und NS-Metaphern im öffentlichen Kommunikationsraum sowie in E-Mails an die Israelische Botschaft und den Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland: Korpuslinguistische Perspektiven auf konzeptuelle, strukturelle und funktionale Charakteristika." PhD diss., Technische Universität Berlin, 2017.
- Globisch, Claudia. *Radikaler Antisemitismus: Inklusions- und Exklusionssemantiken von links und rechts in Deutschland*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2013.
- Grigat, Stephan. "Antisemitismus und Antizionismus in der Linken." *Hagalil*, April 18, 2002. <http://www.hagalil.com/antisemitismus/europa/linker-antisemitismus.htm>.
- Haury, Thomas. *Antisemitismus von links: Kommunistische Ideologie, Nationalismus und Antizionismus in der frühen DDR*. Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2002.
- Haury, Thomas. "Der neue Antisemitismusstreit der deutschen Linken." In *Neuer Antisemitismus? Eine globale Debatte*, edited by Doron Rabinovici, Ulrich Speck, and Natan Sznajder, 143–67. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2004.
- Haury, Thomas. "Die ideologischen Grundlagen des Antizionismus in der Linken." *D-A-S-H*, 2005. [http://www.d-a-s-h.org/dossier/07/08\\_grundlagenantizionismus.html](http://www.d-a-s-h.org/dossier/07/08_grundlagenantizionismus.html).
- Haury, Thomas. "Von der linken Kritik des Zionismus zum antisemitischen Antizionismus von links." In *Antisemitismus: Geschichte und Gegenwart*, edited by Samuel Salzborn, 127–58. Giessen: NBKK, 2004.
- Haury, Thomas. "Zur Logik des bundesdeutschen Antizionismus." In *Vom Antizionismus zum Antisemitismus*, edited by Léon Poliakov, 125–59. Freiburg: ça ira, 1993.
- Heger, Timo-Christian. "Die Linke und der Jihad: Ideologische Schnittstellen zwischen der extremen Linken und dem sunnitischen Islamismus." MA thesis, Universität Potsdam, 2007.
- Herf, Jeffrey. *Undeclared Wars with Israel: East Germany and the West German Far Left, 1967–1989*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.
- Holz, Klaus. *Nationaler Antisemitismus: Wissenssoziologie einer Weltanschauung*. Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2010.
- Imhoff, Maximilian Elias. *Antisemitismus in der Linken: Ergebnisse einer quantitativen Befragung*. Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 2011.
- International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. "Working Definition of Antisemitism." Issued May 26, 2016. Accessed February 1, 2021. [https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/sites/default/files/press\\_release\\_document\\_antisemitism.pdf](https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/sites/default/files/press_release_document_antisemitism.pdf).
- Kessler, Mario. *Antisemitismus, Zionismus und Sozialismus: Arbeiterbewegung und jüdische Frage im 20. Jahrhundert*. Mainz: Decaton, 1994.
- Kistenmacher, Olaf. *Arbeit und "jüdisches Kapital": Antisemitische Aussagen in der KPD-Tageszeitung "Die Rote Fahne" während der Weimarer Republik*. Bremen: edition lumière, 2016.

- Kistenmacher, Olaf. "Vom 'Judas' zum 'Judenkapital': Antisemitische Denkformen in der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands der Weimarer Republik, 1918–1933." In *Exklusive Solidarität: Linker Antisemitismus in Deutschland. Vom Idealismus zur Antiglobalisierungsbewegung*, edited by Matthias Brosch et al., 69–86. Berlin: Metropolis, 2007.
- Kloke, Martin W. "Antisemitismus in der Linkspartei: 'DIE LINKE hat ein Problem mit Antisemitinnen und Antisemiten'." In *Antisemitismus in deutschen Parteien*, edited by Dana Ionescu and Samuel Salzborn, 153–93. Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2014.
- Kloke, Martin W. "Antizionismus und Antisemitismus als Weltanschauung? Tendenzen im deutschen Linksradikalismus und -extremismus." In: *Extremismus in Deutschland: Erscheinungsformen und aktuelle Bestandsaufnahme*, edited by Bundesministerium des Innern, 163–95. Berlin: BMI, 2004.
- Kloke, Martin W. "Israel: Alptraum der deutschen Linken?" In *Exklusive Solidarität: Linker Antisemitismus in Deutschland. Vom Idealismus zur Antiglobalisierungsbewegung*, edited by Matthias Brosch et al., 310–16. Berlin: Metropolis, 2007.
- Kloke, Martin W. *Israel und die deutsche Linke: Zur Geschichte eines schwierigen Verhältnisses*. Frankfurt a. M.: Haag und Herchen, 1994.
- Kloke, Martin W. "Kein Frieden mit Israel: Antizionismus in der 'gebildeten' Linken." In *Gebildeter Antisemitismus: Eine Herausforderung für Politik und Zivilgesellschaft*, edited by Monika Schwarz-Friesel, 155–72. Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2015.
- Kloke, Martin W. "Zum Antisemitismus in der deutschen Linken." *Jüdisches Forum für Demokratie und gegen Antisemitismus*, 2017. <https://jfda.de/blog/2017/09/18/zum-antisemitismus-in-der-deutschen-linken>.
- Kraushaar, Wolfgang. *Die Bombe im Jüdischen Gemeindehaus*. Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, Institut für Sozialforschung, 2005.
- Kraushaar, Wolfgang. "Wann endlich beginnt bei Euch der Kampf gegen die heilige Kuh Israel?" *München 1970: Über die antisemitischen Wurzeln des deutschen Terrorismus*. Reinbek: Rowohlt Verlag, 2013.
- Küntzel, Matthias. "Die Jakob Augstein-Debatte: Eine verpasste Chance." In *Gebildeter Antisemitismus: Eine Herausforderung für Politik und Zivilgesellschaft*, edited by Monika Schwarz-Friesel, 53–74. Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2015.
- Kuhn, Philip. "Dämonisierung mit dem Ziel der Delegitimierung." *Die Welt*, January 16, 2013. <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article112787522/Daemonisierung-mit-dem-Ziel-der-Delegitimierung.html>.
- Laqueur, Walter. *Gesichter des Antisemitismus: Von den Anfängen bis heute*. Berlin: Propyläen, 2008.
- Ludwig, Andrea. *Neue oder Deutsche Linke? Nation und Nationalismus im Denken von Linken und Grünen*. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1995.
- Markovits, Andrei S. *Amerika, dich haßt sich's besser: Antiamerikanismus und Antisemitismus in Europa*. Hamburg: Konkret Literatur Verlag, 2004.
- Markovits, Andrei S. "Europäischer Antiamerikanismus und Antisemitismus: Immer gegenwärtig, obwohl immer verleugnet." In *Exklusive Solidarität: Linker Antisemitismus in Deutschland: Vom Idealismus zur Antiglobalisierungsbewegung*, edited by Matthias Brosch, et al., 239–62. Berlin: Metropolis, 2007.
- Markovits, Andrei S. *Uncouth Nation: Why Europe Dislikes America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007.

- Meining, Stefan. "Zwischen Nichtbeziehung, Feindschaft und später Annäherung: die Deutsche Demokratische Republik und Israel." In *Deutschland, die Juden und der Staat Israel: Eine politische Bestandsaufnahme*, edited by Olaf Glöckner and Julius H. Schoeps, 176–91. Hildesheim: Olms, 2016.
- Mertens, Lothar. "Antizionismus: Feindschaft gegen Israel als eine neue Form des Antisemitismus." In *Antisemitismus in Deutschland: Zur Aktualität eines Vorurteils*, edited by Wolfgang Benz, 89–100. München: DTV, 1995.
- Mertens, Lothar. "Die SED und die NS-Vergangenheit." In *Schwieriges Erbe: Der Umgang mit Nationalsozialismus und Antisemitismus in Österreich, der DDR und der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, edited by Werner Bergmann, Rainer Erb, and Albert Lichtblau, 194–211. Frankfurt am Main/New York: Campus, 1995.
- Müller, Natascha, and Oliver Marusczyk. *Marxistische Faschismusanalysen als Zeitdiagnose: Zur unterschiedlichen Rezeption des Nationalsozialismus*. München: AVM Akademische Verlagsgemeinschaft, 2014.
- N. N. "Antisemitismus-Vorwurf wegen Karikatur: 'SZ' bezeichnet Veröffentlichung als 'Fehler'." *Spiegel Online*, July 3, 2013. <http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/gesellschaft/antisemitismus-vorwurf-sueddeutsche-nennt-veroeffentlichung-fehler-a-909299.html>.
- N. N. "Mark-Zuckerberg-Karikatur: Antisemitismus-Vorwurf gegen 'Süddeutsche Zeitung'." *Spiegel Online*, February 25, 2014. <http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/gesellschaft/mark-zuckerberg-wiesenthal-center-kritisiert-sueddeutsche-fuer-antisemitische-karikatur-a-955613.html>.
- Nowak, Peter. *Kurze Geschichte der Antisemitismusdebatte in der deutschen Linken*. Münster: edition assemblage, 2013.
- Pallade, Yves. "Aktueller Antisemitismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland." In *Neues vom Antisemitismus: Zustände in Deutschland*, edited by Horst Helas, Dagmar Rubisch, and Reiner Zilkenat, 97–106. Dietz: Berlin, 2008.
- Poggrund, Benjamin. *Drawing Fire: Investigating the Accusations of Apartheid in Israel*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014.
- Poggrund, Benjamin. "Israel has many Injustices: But it is not an Apartheid State." *Guardian*, May 22, 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/may/22/israel-in-justices-not-apartheid-state>.
- Poliakov, Léon. *Geschichte des Antisemitismus. Band V: Die Aufklärung und ihre jüdenfeindliche Tendenz*. Worms: Heintz, 1983.
- Rensmann, Lars. "Antisemitismus und Israelfeindschaft." In *Deutschland, die Juden und der Staat Israel: Eine politische Bestandsaufnahme*, edited by Olaf Glöckner and Julius H. Schoeps, 265–84. Hildesheim: Olms, 2016.
- Rensmann, Lars. *Demokratie und Judenbild: Antisemitismus in der politischen Kultur der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2004.
- Rensmann, Lars. "Der Nahost-Konflikt in der Perzeption des Rechts- und Linksextremismus." In *Neu-alter Judenhass: Antisemitismus, arabisch-israelischer Konflikt und europäische Politik*, edited by Klaus Faber, Julius H. Schoeps, and Sacha Stawski, 33–48. Berlin: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg, 2006.
- Rensmann, Lars, and Julius H. Schoeps, eds. *Feindbild Judentum: Antisemitismus in Europa*. Berlin: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg, 2008.

- Salzborn, Samuel. "Die Linkspartei hat ein Antisemitismusproblem." *Die Welt*, June 8, 2010. <http://www.welt.de/debatte/kommentare/article7957984/Die-Linkspartei-hat-ein-Antisemitismusproblem.html>.
- Salzborn, Samuel. *Kampf der Ideen: Die Geschichte politischer Theorien im Kontext*. Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2017.
- Salzborn, Samuel, and Sebastian Voigt. "Antisemiten als Koalitionspartner? Die Linkspartei zwischen antizionistischem Antisemitismus und dem Streben nach Regierungsfähigkeit." *Zeitschrift für Politik* 3, no. 58 (2011): 290–309.
- Schmidt, Holger J. *Antizionismus, Israelkritik und "Judenknax": Antisemitismus in der deutschen Linken nach 1945*. Bonn: Bouvier, 2010.
- Schwarz-Friesel, Monika. "Explizite und implizite Formen des Verbal-Antisemitismus in aktuellen Texten der regionalen und überregionalen Presse (2002–2010) und ihr Einfluss auf den alltäglichen Sprachgebrauch." In *Judenfeindschaft und Antisemitismus in der deutschen Presse über fünf Jahrhunderte: Erscheinungsformen, Rezeption, Debatte und Gegenwehr*, edited by Michael Nagel and Moshe Zimmermann, 993–1008. Bremen: Edition Lumière, 2013.
- Schwarz-Friesel, Monika, and Jehuda Reinharz. *Inside the Antisemitic Mind: The Language of Jew-Hatred in Contemporary Germany*. Boston: University Press of New England, 2017.
- Silberner, Edmund. *Kommunisten zur Judenfrage: Zur Geschichte von Theorie und Praxis des Kommunismus*. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1983.
- Silberner, Edmund. *Sozialisten zur Judenfrage: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Sozialismus vom Anfang des 19. Jahrhunderts bis 1914*. Berlin: Colloquium, 1962.
- Stein, Timo. *Zwischen Antisemitismus und Israelkritik: Antizionismus in der deutschen Linken*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2011.
- Timm, Angelika. *Hammer, Zirkel, Davidstern: Das gestörte Verhältnis der DDR zu Zionismus und Staat Israel*. Bonn: Bouvier, 1997.
- Ullrich, Peter. *Die Linke, Israel und Palästina: Nahostdiskurse in Großbritannien und Deutschland*. Berlin: Dietz, 2008.
- Volkov, Shulamit. *Antisemitismus als kultureller Code: Zehn Essays*. München: C.H. Beck, 2000.
- Weiß, Volker. "Die antizionistische Rezeption des Nahostkonflikts in der militanten Linken der BRD." In *Antisemitismus, Antizionismus, Israelkritik*, edited by Moshe Zuckermann, 214–38. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2005.
- Wistrich, Robert S. "Left-Wing Anti-Zionism in Western Societies." In *Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism in the Contemporary World*, edited by Robert S. Wistrich, 46–52. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990.
- Zick, Andreas, Beate Küpper, and Daniela Krause. *Gespaltene Mitte – Feindselige Zustände: Rechtsextreme Einstellungen in Deutschland 2016*. Edited for the Friedrich Ebert Foundation by Ralf Melzer. Bonn: Dietz, 2016.