

MERIA

GROWING ANTISEMITISM AND ANTI-JEWISH HATRED IN THE NETHERLANDS

By Barry Rubin*

This article discusses increasing anti-Jewish hatred in the Netherlands, in particular due to the growing Muslim immigrant population there. Though the Dutch government has been traditionally friendly to Israel and there has been proportionately less antisemitism there compared to in other European countries, shocking slanders appear about Israel in the mainstream Dutch media and there has also been an academic boycott of Israel. In addition, Dutch politicians have been afraid to address this rising antisemitism and anti-Jewish hatred for fear of losing the Muslim vote. As a result, it is becoming increasingly difficult for Jews to remain in the country, making the future of the Dutch Jewish community uncertain.

The most popular manual on how to raise one's children as proper Muslims published in the Netherlands, in Dutch, includes virulently antisemitic passages, based on Muslim holy texts. After the Jewish community objected to its publication, the authorities forced the publisher to put white tape over the offending passages. The tape, however, could easily be peeled off by purchasers so that these words could be read.

In another incident, a Turkish-Dutch researcher publicized systematic antisemitism among other Muslims in the Netherlands, including a dramatic video that showed teenage boys calling for genocide and praising Hitler. The researcher, Mehmet Sahin, had to go into hiding after being accused by others of being a Jew and a Zionist. This is the pattern of growing antisemitism in Western Europe. The European Union, governments, and the media paste a white tape over the problem to conceal it or pretend to do something about it, but when one peels back the tape, the hatred is revealed as growing and being passed onto the next generation.

In addition, another study in the Flanders region of Belgium--initiated by that country's government--concluded that while only 10 percent of young non-Muslims are antisemitic, 45 to 50 percent of Muslims are. In fact, that latter number has been interpreted down from 70 percent.¹ While one doesn't want to exaggerate rising antisemitism in Europe--mostly from Muslim immigrants and their children, but facilitated and even reflected by the increasingly intellectually hegemonic left--the growth of anti-Jewish hatred is enormous. Some people view this as fear-mongering, pointing to other developments that show the glass to be half full. Indeed, the hostility of European governments toward Israel has often been exaggerated. The situation is actually better than it was 20 or 30 years ago.

Yet the broader question is one of social trends and the behavior of institutions, especially the mass media and universities, which are generally becoming not just critical but viciously so of Israel and periodically Jews in general. In the case of the Netherlands, a mild-mannered country that prides itself on moderation in all things,

the country was traditionally friendly to Israel. While it has always had its antisemites and even--historically--fascists, it had far less proportionately than other European countries. In other words, if things are bad in the Netherlands, they are really bad.

In 2012, in a published interview with the chief rabbi of the Netherlands, he spoke extensively about his love for the country, the good treatment of Jews there, and other such points. Asked at the end, however, whether there was any future for Jews in the country, he replied, "No," and advised the community to move to Israel. This does not mean the Netherlands is a maelstrom of antisemitism. It isn't, but there is a growing antisemitic sector consisting of two parts: Muslim immigrants and their offspring as well as the far left that is so often dominant in the Netherlands--as in other Western countries.

The Dutch government, unlike others in Europe, has defined Hizballah as a terrorist group, and while less favorable to Israel than its predecessor remains on good terms with Israel. Yet shocking slanders appear about Israel in the mainstream Dutch media. To cite just one example, on March 17, 2010, *NRC Handelsblad*, Holland's most prestigious newspaper, published a front-page article claiming the "Israel lobby" was threatening to defeat President Barack Obama's health plan to blackmail him regarding his Israel policy. While statements on other matters by Israel's government are evaluated in a cynical way, the basis for this story was a single left-wing blogger.

Yet at the same time, the country's leading researcher on radical Islamists, Professor Edwin Bakker of Leiden University, warns that the number of jihadists is growing so quickly that government security services cannot keep track of them.² An observer who wishes to avoid exaggerating the problem also warns

about: "A rising tide of antisemitism that the top level is unwilling to address out of a fear of being labeled a racist or out of a fear of losing the all-important Muslim vote," which is vital for the left in elections. There is no effective opposition in the political sphere. The center dithers; some on the right speak out but do nothing effective.

A Dutch person involved in intercommunal work adds, "I know many upstanding young Muslims who are as appalled by antisemitism" and these voices should not be forgotten. It should also be remembered that there have been attacks on mosques over the years. In contrast, though, a moderate left politician described in great detail how her family was forced to leave their neighborhood by verbal and at times violent harassment by Muslim youths there.

The issue, then, is not just coming from Middle Eastern politics but also the tensions within Dutch society and how Muslim immigrants and their children interpret their problems. Endlessly told that the Jews are their enemy and that they control society in some way, it is easy to conclude that the Jews might also be behind the harassment or discrimination Muslims face, absurd as this is on a factual level and in countries where the Jewish population is tiny.

Here is how one observer recounted this issue:

As a journalist I roamed the streets around high schools in Amsterdam the day after 9/11 to catch the "sound of the streets." I was totally unprepared for all the antisemitic remarks uttered by [Muslim] boys of 11 to 16 years. Later I spoke with teachers who told me this was an ongoing thing.

I also interviewed a Moroccan in a high position. He said two things that struck me: "Since the beginning of TV transmissions in Morocco, the news start with news about Palestine. You

in the Netherlands will never understand the degree with which Moroccans identify with Palestine.”

“My Moroccan friends [in the Netherlands] among teachers and intellectuals agree Israel has a right to exist, but we can never say that in public because we would lose the backing of our Moroccan [community].”

Elma Drayer is a liberal Dutch columnist and former editor of the prestigious newspaper *Trouw*, writing on its site. She is also Jewish. In an article, “The Taboo Against Antisemitism Has Disappeared,” she expresses shock that nobody else seems to be appalled by a recent television program on the Netherlands 2 channel in which a group of young Muslims, whose roots are in Turkey, are interviewed by a researcher. (Incidentally, in Dutch discussions, the Turks are considered the relative moderates compared to the supposedly more radical immigrants from Morocco.) Only CIDI, the Jewish community’s lobbying group, noted the program, asking the Minister of education in an open letter to undertake a national survey of antisemitic prejudice among high school students.³ Drayer concludes: “For exactly eighty years after the greatest Jew hater of all time began, the taboo has disappeared.”⁴

There is a great deal of evidence for this ranging from the chief rabbi’s conclusion that there was no future for Jews in the Netherlands to the wild ovations received from packed audiences for an anti-Israel, antisemitic film among Turkish immigrant audiences in the Netherlands. In addition, there is the 2012, investigation by Lisa Nederveen in her M.A. thesis. In the video (see appendix below), the well-intentioned interviewer tries to get the young people to tone down their criticism, a tactic which in itself shows the problem. He implies that it

is okay to kill just Jewish men. The young people disagree. He later says that many Jews disagree with Israel, implying that it is okay to kill Israelis and pro-Israel Jews.

That is still too moderate for them.

What is particularly fascinating is the young man’s quotation from Hitler. While it is unknown where he had heard this quote, it is one that is used repeatedly in Islamist propaganda. It is quite likely it came from there rather than from neo-Nazi literature.

By knowing about Gypsies and disabled people, the boy shows clearly that he is by no means ignorant about the Nazi era, perhaps the result of instruction in school. Of course, completely apart from the Holocaust, the Netherlands itself suffered greatly from Nazism. If genocide against the Jews was insufficient to make these young people dislike Hitler, one would expect that some sense of Dutch patriotism might do so. Of course, that doesn’t happen.

Given the fact that this hatred is endemic among Dutch Muslims; that their proportion and influence in the country is increasing; and that there are literally no countervailing forces, will this viewpoint increase or decrease? Clearly, the former is likely. Even in the Dutch mass media there are shocking things written on a regular basis about Jews and Israel. If one cannot depend on the Netherlands to defeat this trend, nobody will do better.⁵

APPENDIX: TRANSCRIPT OF TELEVISION PROGRAM BASED ON MEHMET SAHIN’S RESEARCH⁶

Boy in the blue shirt says: “...I’m quite satisfied with what Hitler did to the Jews.”

Another boy: “Yes, me too.”

Boy in blue shirt: "Because Hitler once said: The day will come that you'll agree with me for killing all the Jews."

Youth worker: "What do you mean 'agree,' because he also killed women and children."

Boy in blue shirt: "Yeah, so? They're all Jewish."

Boy in black shirt: "The hatred of Jews is because they're stealing innocent people's land in Gaza, and they're killing a lot of people."

Youth worker: "That's why you hate Jews?"

Boy in black shirt: "Yes."

Youth worker: "So you also think it's right that Hitler slaughtered millions of Jews?"

1:27, boy in black shirt: "There are also millions of Palestinians..."

Youth worker: "No, you can't say millions of Palestinians... From whom do you get this...?"

Boy in blue shirt: "Question, do you hate the Jews yourself or not?"

Youth worker: "No."

Boy: "What do you think of the situation in Gaza?"

Youth worker: "That's got nothing to do with Judaism, but world politics."

Boy: "Who are they, then?"

Youth worker: "There are also lots of Jews who are against the policies of Israel."

Researcher: "Do you know that a lot more groups were [persecuted by the Nazis], not only Jews?"

Boy: "Yes, Gypsies, and disabled people."

Researcher: "People with a different appearance. Not many Muslims lived in Europe back then, but..."

Boy in black shirt: "Yes, I think that's bad."

Youth worker: "How many Jewish friends do you have?"

Boy in blue shirt: "None."

Youth worker: "Do you know any Jews who live here?"

Boy in blue shirt: "No."

Youth worker: "Then how can you say something like this? Without ever knowing someone?"

Boy in blue shirt: "You don't have to know Jews to say something about them. It's freedom of speech."

Youth worker: "I'm very much in favor of freedom of speech, but I'm very interested in how you got an opinion like this... based on what? The internet? Or from a mosque?"

Boy in blue shirt: "Yeah, just... also between friends..."

Youth worker: "Mainly Muslim friends?"

Boy in blue shirt: "Yes."

Youth worker: "So you're having conversations like this with each other?"

Boy in blue shirt: "Of course."

3:00, youth worker: "And you have Dutch friends too with whom you talk like this?"

Boy in black sweater: "Yes, they also dislike Jews."

Boy on the right: "I also have a lot of Dutch friends that dislike Jews."

Youth worker: "Why?"

Boy on right: "Our entire school doesn't like Jews. Come to our school, I mean it."

Youth worker: "Native Dutch too?"

Boy on right: "Yes."

Youth worker: "So do you call each other 'Jews?'" (when calling names)

Boy: "Yes, 'Jew' is a bad word."

Boy in blue shirt: "Let me explain why. When calling someone names, you want to wish them the worst, right? For example, 'cancer.' People curse with 'cancer' when they want to wish someone the worst. The same with 'Jew.' A Jew is the worst thing for us."

3:54, youth worker: "Hitler killed babies of six months, two months old..."

Boy in blue shirt: "If they're Jewish, I approve."

Youth worker: "How can you say something like this? I'm startled by what you say... Hitler killed innocent people on the spot..."

Boy in blue shirt: "If they're Jews..."

Boy in black sweater: "You don't know if they were innocent."

Youth worker: "Hitler clearly said that they weren't part of the Aryan race."

Boy in black sweater: "Why would Hitler hate Jews then, I'm sure he had a reason."

4:28, youth worker: "So you are extreme right-wing boys, Turkish extreme right-wing boys... (laughing) pathetic boys you are"

Boy in blue shirt: "I hate Jews. Period. You can't take that away from me."

Youth worker: "I'm going to take it away from you. I will succeed. I think that in a year you'll think differently."

Boys: "No, you won't succeed."

Boy in blue shirt: "I'm going to put 50 euros on the table. I dare to bet with you. 50 euros. You won't succeed."

Youth worker: "Okay, 50 euros."

** Barry Rubin is director of the Global Research in International Affairs (GLORIA) Center and editor of the Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA). He is also a columnist for [PJMedia](#). Among his latest books are [Israel: An Introduction](#) and [Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East](#). Thirteen of his books are also available for [free download](#), including *The Arab States and the Palestine Conflict*, *The Long War for Freedom: The Arab Struggle for Democracy in the Middle East* and *The Truth About Syria*.*

NOTES

¹ Bart Schut, “Antisemitisme onder jonge moslims is fundamenteel en diepgeworteld,” *Volkscrant*, March 18, 2013,

<http://www.volkscrant.nl/vk/nl/3184/opinie/article/detail/3411050/2013/03/18/Antisemitisme-onder-jonge-moslims-is-fundamenteel-en-diepgeworteld-probleem.dhtml>.

² Bart Olmer, “Razendsnelle radicalisatie moslimjongeren,” *Telegraaf*, March 25, 2013,

http://www.telegraaf.nl/binnenland/2142053/1/Razendsnelle_radicalisatie.html.

³ “CIDI roept minister op tot onderzoek antisemitische vooroordelen onder scholieren,” *CIDI*, February 26, 2013, <http://www.cidi.nl/Nieuwsberichten/CIDI-roept-minister-op-tot-landelijk-onderzoek-antisemitische-vooroordelen-onder-scholieren.html>.

⁴ Elma Drayer, “Het taboe op Jodenhaat is verdwenen,” *Trouw*, February 28, 2013, <http://www.trouw.nl/tr/nl/6847/Elma-Drayer/article/detail/3401388/2013/02/28/Het-taboe-op-Jodenhaat-is-verdwenen.dhtml>.

Translation provided for author.

⁵ For more on this issue, see: *Antisemitism Worldwide* (2009),

<http://www.tau.ac.il/Anti-Semitism/asw2009/netherlands.html>. See also Dina Porat and Roni Stauber (eds.), *Antisemitism Worldwide 2009: General Analysis*, (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 2009),

http://humanities.tau.ac.il/roth/images/general-analysis-09_NEW.pdf. For more recent years, see:

<http://humanities.tau.ac.il/roth/2012-09-10-07-07-36/general-analyses>; Benjamin

Weinthal, “Dutch Anti-Semitism Reaches Record High,” *Jerusalem Post*, September 19, 2010, <http://www.jpost.com/Jewish-World/Jewish-News/Dutch-anti-Semitism-reaches-record-high>.

⁶

Dumpert, <http://www.dumpert.nl/embed/6529612/8361d1f0/>. Transcript translated for author.