

Islamic Jihadism and the Legacy of Nazi Antisemitism

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This article argues that the central tenets of National Socialist antisemitism are reflected in antisemitism that defines Jihadist ideology. Like Nazis, Jihadists ideologues embrace a totalitarian worldview dividing humanity into good and evil, with the Jew as the primary, unredeemable evil. Hasan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, and Haj Amin al-Husseini are examined. Drawing largely on *Mein Kampf* the article outlines the Jihadist strategy of using propaganda in order to incite Jew hatred and to promote fanaticism demonstrating that the Jihadist hatred of the “Zionist entity” has nothing to do with the occupation; rather, it is a religious hatred of evil itself, which takes “Zion” to be a base of operations for the Jewish domination of the world: the Jews must be destroyed for the sake of all humanity.

The last words to come from the hand of Adolf Hitler as he prepared for his suicide were a plea to humanity to continue to “resist mercilessly the poisoner of all nations, international Jewry.”¹ Numerous groups have heeded the Führer’s dying words, from the North America’s Aryan Nations to the British Nationalist Front, from Russia’s Pamyat Nazi Party to the International Stormfront; Wikipedia, in fact, lists eighty-seven such organizations.² The most systematic, most pervasive, most violent response to the call of the Führer, however, has come from the Islamic Jihadists. No other groups bent on the extermination of the Jews are so heavily armed or so generously funded, often receiving support from Islamic governments. Where and how did this bond between Nazi antisemitism and Islamic Jihadism arise? And what does it tell us about the extent to which Jihadist antisemitism represents a further development of Nazi antisemitism?

1. Quoted in David Welch, *Hitler* (London: UCL Press, 1998), 97.
2. *List of Neo-Nazi Organizations*, Wikipedia.org, accessed September 6, 2015, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_neo-Nazi_organizations.

EARLY INFLUENCES AND THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPAGANDA

From the time he founded the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928, Hasan al-Banna, author of “On Jihad,”³ professed his admiration of Adolf Hitler.⁴ During the 1930’s he sent delegations to the Nuremberg rallies,⁵ and in October 1938 the Brotherhood organized the Parliamentary Conference for Arab and Muslim Countries in Cairo, where they distributed Arabic translations of *Mein Kampf* and *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Al-Banna indicated that he had learned a great deal from the Führer about the importance and methods of propaganda.⁶ Both for the Nazis and for the Islamic Jihadists, the aim of propaganda was neither to inform nor to persuade but, in the words of Hitler, to “reimplant the spirit of proud self-reliance, manly defiance, and wrathful hatred.”⁷ In keeping with the aim of implanting wrathful hatred, Hitler understood deception to be an important part of any propaganda campaign, insisting that “something of the most insolent lie will always remain and stick.”⁸ The Nazis were masters of “the most insolent lie,” accusing the Jews of everything from the age-old Blood Libel to secretly plotting to take over the world. And the Jihadists repeat the Nazi lies.

Learning well his lessons from the Nazis, al-Banna “gave careful thought to all the details of a far-flung propaganda campaign,”⁹ and in 1935 he organized the Muslim Brotherhood’s first propaganda committee.¹⁰ Slogans extolling the Nazis were part of the propaganda that the Brotherhood spread during the Palestinian Arab Revolt of 1936 – 1939, an uprising not only incited by the Mufti of Jerusalem and future Nazi activist Haj Amin al-Husseini,¹¹ but also supported by arms and money from the

3. See Hasan al-Banna, *Five Tracts of Hasan al-Banna: A Selection from the Majmuat Rasail al-Imam al-Shahid Hasan al-Banna*, trans. Charles Wendell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 133-61.

4. See, for example, *ibid.*, 97.

5. Matthias Küntzel, *Jihad and Jew-Hatred: Islamism, Nazism and the Roots of 9/11*, trans. Colin Meade (New York: Telos Press, 2007), 30.

6. *Ibid.*, 45-46.

7. Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971), 632.

8. *Ibid.*, 232.

9. Christina Phelps Harris, *Nationalism and Revolution in Egypt: The Role of the Muslim Brotherhood* (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1964), 152.

10. Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 55.

11. Ziad Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza: Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic Jihad* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 1.

Nazis.¹² The Brotherhood's insolent lies about the Jews found a receptive audience among the Arab Muslims, many of whom applauded the Nazi agenda. During those years, for example, there was a musical refrain that floated about the Middle East: "Bala Misou, bala Mister, bissama Allah, oria alard Hitler (No more monsieur, No more Mister, in heaven Allah, on earth Hitler)."¹³ The Arab Revolt as promoted by Haj Amin al-Husseini, notes Matthias Kuntzel,

took place against the background of the swastika: Arab leaflets and signs on walls were prominently marked with this Nazi symbol; youth organizations. . .paraded as 'Nazi-scouts,' and Arab children greeted each other with the Nazi salute.¹⁴

A JIHADIST TIE TO THE NAZIS: HAJ AMIN AL-HUSSEINI

In March 1933 al-Husseini had his first meeting with Nazi General Consul Heinrich Wolff in Jerusalem. While cultivating his contacts with the Germans, he established connections with the Muslim Brotherhood, when he met with Abdul Rahman al-Banna, brother of Hasan al-Banna, who went to Jerusalem to set up an alliance with the Mufti in 1935. On 2 October 1937 al-Husseini met with Adolf Eichmann and Herbert Hagen; Eichmann "reported that 'Nazi flags fly in Palestine, and they adorn their houses with Swastikas and portraits of Hitler.'"¹⁵ Days later, wanted for inciting insurrection against the British Mandate, the Mufti fled to Lebanon. Two years later he set up his base of operations in Baghdad and was on the payroll of the Nazis until the end of the war. Once the war was underway, he joined with Rashid Ali al-Gaylani to lead a Nazi-backed takeover of the Iraqi government on 1 April 1941. By 31 May the British had suppressed the coup, but not before al-Husseini issued a fatwa announcing a jihad against Britain and the Jews.¹⁶ On 28 November 1941 the Mufti met with Adolf Hitler, who assured him that the Nazis and the Arabs were engaged in the same struggle to exterminate the Jews.¹⁷ By January 1942 al-Husseini was recruiting Muslims to serve in SS killing

12. Jeffrey Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 21.

13. Raoul Aglion, *The Fighting French* (New York: Holt, 1943), 217.

14. Matthias Kuntzel, "National Socialism and Anti-Semitism in the Arab World," *Jewish Political Studies Review* 17 (Spring 2005), Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, accessed September 6, 2015, <http://www.jcpa.org/phas/phas-kuntzel-s05.htm>.

15. Chuck Morse, *The Nazi Connection to Islamic Terrorism* (New York: iUniverse, 2003), 46.

16. Joseph B. Schechtman, *The Mufti and the Fuehrer: The Rise and Fall of Haj Amin el-Husseini* (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1965), 110.

17. *Ibid.*, 306.

units, the most infamous of which was the Handschar Division of 21,065 men.¹⁸

Although Gilbert Achcar claims that “the number of books” about al-Husseini “is altogether disproportionate to his historical importance,”¹⁹ he nevertheless notes the Mufti’s ideological affinity with the Nazis as evidenced in a speech that the Mufti delivered on 2 November 1943. There al-Husseini declared that the Jews’ inherent traits “make them incapable of keeping faith with anyone or of mixing with any other nation: they live, rather, as parasites among peoples, suck their blood, steal their property, pervert their morals. False Germany is also struggling against the common foe who oppressed Arabs and Muhammadans in their different countries. It has clearly recognized the Jews for what they are and resolved to find a definitive solution for the Jewish danger that will eliminate the scourge that the Jews represent in the world.”²⁰ On 21 January 1944 al-Husseini began his radio broadcasts for that year by declaring, “National Socialist Germany is fighting world Jewry. The Koran says, ‘You will find that the Jews are the worst enemies of the Moslems.’ There are also considerable similarities between Islamic principles and those of National Socialism.”²¹ Klaus Gensicke lists seven principles that the Mufti identified as ideological affinities between the Nazis and the Jihadists: (1) the oneness of leadership embodied in the Führerprinzip, (2) the rule of power and the insistence upon obedience, (3) the primacy of battle and waging war, (4) the unification of the Volk or the umma, (5) the importance of family and the proper indoctrination of children, (6) hatred of the Jews, and (7) the virtues of hard work and creativity.²²

On 1 March 1944, in one of his Nazi propaganda broadcasts to the Arab world, al-Husseini enjoined Muslims to “kill the Jews wherever you find them. This pleases God.”²³ After the war ended, now a wanted Nazi war criminal, he turned up in Egypt on 20 June 1946, where he received a hero’s welcome. Ten days later the Muslim Brotherhood publicly extolled al-Husseini, declaring, “The Arab hero and symbol of Al Jihad and patience and struggle is here in Egypt.”²⁴ Soon he had his first official

18. David G. Dalin and John F. Rothman, *Icon of Evil: Hitler’s Mufti and the Rise of Radical Islam* (New York: Random House, 2008), 55.

19. Gilbert Achcar, *The Arabs and the Holocaust: The Arab-Israeli War of Narratives* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2009), 131.

20. *Ibid.*, 157.

21. Quoted in Morse, *The Nazi Connection to Islamic Terrorism*, 82; see also Schechtman, *The Mufti and the Fuehrer*, 139.

22. Klaus Gensicke, *Der Mufti von Jerusalem, Amin el-Husseini, und die Nationalsozialisten* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1988), 207.

23. Quoted in Morse, *The Nazi Connection to Islamic Terrorism*, 62.

24. Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World*, 242.

meeting with al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb, the man who would become the most influential of the Jihadist ideologues; now allied with Hitler's Grossmufti, the Brotherhood would continue "the same struggle that Hitler and Germany—and Husseini himself—had been waging during the war."²⁵

SYSTEMATIZING JIHADIST IDEOLOGY: SAYYID QUTB

The writings of Sayyid Qutb reflect both parallels and likely influences of Nazi thinking. Central to both Nazi and Jihadist Jew hatred is the principle that the Jew is an invisible enemy of humanity, an "invisible wirepuller,"²⁶ Hitler puts it, as invisible—as metaphysical—as Satan. Here we have two essential ties between the antisemitism of the Nazis and the antisemitism of Islamic Jihadists such as Qutb: (1) the promulgation of the lie that the Jews are secretly, invisibly plotting to take over the world through their invisible control over the banks, media, and power centers, and (2) the Jews embody the invisible, insidious essence of evil itself. The point is not that the Jews' actions are evil but that they are themselves the source of all evil actions. Qutb even accused Jews of secretly installing Zionists operatives in the highest echelons of Muslim regimes that he did not deem Muslim enough.²⁷ Reiterating numerous declarations from Hitler, Qutb averred that the aim of international world Jewry is to "eliminate all limitations, especially the limitations imposed by faith and religion, so that the Jews may penetrate into the body politic of the whole world and then may be free to perpetuate their evil designs."²⁸ The final solution to such a threat? The Islamic domination of the world—hence the absolute need for worldwide jihad.

The second point that the Jihadists such as Qutb draw from the Nazis—namely that that the Jew not only commits evil but embodies the essence of evil and is therefore beyond remission—is equally crucial to an understanding of Islamic Jihadism and the legacy of Nazi antisemitism. Here one must consider the category of race in Nazi thinking. More than a biological or anthropological category, the notion of "race" in Nazi ideology is rooted not just in color or physiognomy, but in a concept of essence: it is a metaphysical category that fuses body and soul, biology and being, into one. The concept has a name: it is *Rassenseele* or "race-soul." Explaining the meaning of *Rassenseele*, Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg

25. Ibid., 244.

26. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 493.

27. Quoted in Ronald L. Nettle, *Past Trials and Present Tribulations: A Muslim Fundamentalist's View of the Jews* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1987), 50.

28. Sayyid Qutb, *Maalim fi al-Tariq [Milestones]* (Damascus: Dar Al-Ilm, 2006), 111.

writes, “Soul means race viewed from within.”²⁹ If race may be viewed from within, then it is not reducible to any outward manifestation such as skin tones or hair texture; rather it is conceptual. This concept, says Rosenberg, “departs from the single but completely decisive avowal. . . that blood and character, race and soul are merely different designations for the same entity.”³⁰ If character and soul are in the blood, then so is a way of thinking; the German Geist is “poisoned by Judaism,” says Rosenberg, and not just by Jewish blood, as the –ism is in the blood.³¹ Hence the Jewish threat to humanity “would not be altered,” Rosenberg explains, “if the Jew denied the Talmud, because the national character, which remains the same, would continue to represent an equally inflexible, dogmatic viewpoint.”³²

Cultivating their alliance with the Arabs, the Nazis were careful to insist that their antisemitism was specifically Jew hatred, and did not include Arabs. In November 1942, for example, the *New York Times* reported that a Berlin foreign ministry spokesman took “great pains” to assure the Arabs, “We have never said the Arabs were an inferior race. On the contrary, we have always pointed out the glorious historic past of the Arab people.”³³ What made the Arabs’ past glorious, in the eyes of Nazi thinkers such as Professor Dr. Sturmbannführer Johannes von Leers, was the Jew hatred that manifested itself in the Arabs’ present, as we see from his essay “Judaism and Islam as Opposites,” in which he cites al-Husseini with great admiration.³⁴ There he underscores the fact that “the Quran is full of warnings about the Jews, who are bluntly called ‘Satans’ [see 4:55, 4:60, 58:14-19, and 98:6]” and affirms that the present age owes “a great debt” to the Muslims for battling and exposing the Jews for what they are.³⁵

Here both a distinction and a parallel between the Nazis and the Jihadists must be noted. While the Nazis were indeed racists, their

29. Alfred Rosenberg, *Race and Race History and Other Essays*, ed. Robert Pais (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 34.

30. Quoted in Max Weinreich, *Hitler’s Professors: The Part of Scholarship in Germany’s Crimes against the Jewish People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 26; emphasis in original.

31. Rosenberg, *Race and Race History and Other Essays*, 131-32.

32. *Ibid.*, 183.

33. “Nazis Reassure Arabs—Antisemitism Confined to Jews, Spokesman Explains,” *New York Times*, November 5, 1942; quoted in Andrew G. Bostom, “Islamic Antisemitism—Jew Hatred in Islam,” in *The Legacy of Islamic Antisemitism: From Sacred Texts to Solemn History*, ed. Andrew G. Bostom (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2008), 31.

34. Johann von Leers, “Judaism and Islam as Opposites,” trans. Steven Rendall, in *The Legacy of Islamic Antisemitism*, ed. Andrew G. Bostom (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2008), 621.

35. *Ibid.*, 620.

ideological stance toward the Jews was not reducible to a racist position. Falling outside the array of human races, the Jews were the source of contamination and corruption of all races; they do not constitute a race any more than Satan may be said to belong to a race. Hence, Emil Fackenheim argues, the Nazis were not antisemites because they were racists; rather, they were racists because they were antisemites.³⁶ As for the Jihadists, Qutb insists that Islam rejects all distinctions based on race or class, asserting that “only Islam has the distinction of basing the fundamental binding relationship in its society on belief” alone.³⁷ Indeed, he blames the Jews and Judaism for bringing “racial arrogance” into the world.³⁸ What the Jihadists inherit from the Nazis, then, is not race theory but an essentialist antisemitism, which leads to an exterminationist antisemitism.

Developing the Nazi theme that the Jews embody the essence of evil, Qutb maintained that “Jews as Jews were by nature determined to fight Allah’s Truth and sow corruption and confusion,”³⁹ that the Jews’ “passion to control others” was a “driving force in their national character,”⁴⁰ and that “the deeper cause of the Jewish hatred of Islam was the malevolent Jewish nature.”⁴¹ This malevolence applies to the Jewish state. Like the Nazis, who understood the Jewish evil to lie in the Jewish essence, Qutb’s Jihadist followers set out “not simply to morally delegitimize Israel as a Jewish State and a national entity in the Middle East, but to dehumanize Judaism and the Jewish people as such.”⁴² Once demonized, the Jew is dehumanized and cannot be accorded the same possibility of conversion that is open to the rest of humanity, any more than one can convert the Devil.

THE ATTENDANT FANATICISM

Thus we glimpse the roots of fanatic antisemitism, both Nazi and Jihadist. “The greatness of every mighty organization,” writes Hitler, “lies in the religious fanaticism and intolerance with which, fanatically convinced of its own right, it intolerantly imposes its will against all

36. See Emil L. Fackenheim, “The Holocaust and the State of Israel,” in *A Holocaust Reader: Responses to the Nazi Extermination*, Michael L. Morgan, ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 132.

37. Qutb, *Maalim fi al-Tariq [Milestones]*, 96.

38. Sayyid Qutb, *Basic Principles of the Islamic Worldview*, trans. Rami David (North Haledon, NJ: Islamic Publications International, 2006), 21.

39. Quoted in Nettler, *Past Trials and Present Tribulations*, 35; emphasis added.

40. *Ibid.*, 37-38; emphasis added.

41. *Ibid.*, 44; emphasis added.

42. Kenneth R. Timmerman, *Preachers of Hate: Islam and the War on America* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2004), 63.

others.”⁴³ This fanatic imposition of one’s own will upon all others is the mark both of Nazi and of Jihadist totalitarianism. Just as Hitler declared that he was “acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator,”⁴⁴ so al-Husseini cried out, “Slaughter Jews wherever you find them! Their spilled blood pleases Allah,”⁴⁵ and the Ayatollah Ruhullah Khomeini insisted, “Islam says: Kill in the service of Allah.”⁴⁶ Kill whom? Kill the Jews. Following the diatribes of Qutb (whose writings he translated into Farsi), the Ayatollah writes, “From the very beginning, the historical movement of Islam has had to contend with the Jews, for it was they who first established anti-Islamic propaganda.”⁴⁷ Thus Islam must “make people aware that the Jews and their foreign backers are opposed to the very foundations of Islam and wish to establish Jewish domination throughout the world.”⁴⁸ The war against the Jews, whether Nazi or Jihadist, then, is a holy war that can end only in victory or death. It is not for nothing that in his introduction to the Arabic edition of *Mein Kampf*, the translator Luis al-Haj describes Hitler’s “struggle” as a jihad,⁴⁹ which is holy. There is no surrender, no negotiation, no compromise in a holy war.

The holy war against the Jews is waged against an enemy who is evil incarnate, who is therefore other than human, and who requires extermination. The Jew is “an ape,” says Hitler,⁵⁰ echoing the teaching from the Quran (5:60). “The whole existence of [the Jews],” he adds, “is based on a continuous lie,”⁵¹ also calling to mind verses in the Quran claiming that the Jews falsified Scripture and history to suit their own ends (2:59; 3:78). Therefore to wage a holy war against the Jews is to wage war for the sake of the truth. Indeed, Qutb deemed the Jews the “falsifiers of Divine Truth,”⁵² so that for anyone who loves the truth and hates the lie, Jew hatred is a mark of righteousness: killing Jews—killing evil and lies—is a holy act pleasing to Allah. As the champions of divine truth, Islamic Jihadists must wage war against the Jews, who by definition are committed

43. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 351; emphasis added.

44. *Ibid.*, 65.

45. Tom Knowlton, “Nazi Roots of Modern Radical Islam,” accessed September 6, 2015, <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/news/816232/posts>.

46. Quoted in Amir Taheri, *Holy Terror: Inside the World of Islamic Terrorism* (Bethesda, MD: Adler & Adler, 1987), 242.

47. Ruhullah Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini (1941 – 1980)*, trans. Hamid Algar (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1981), 27.

48. *Ibid.*, 127.

49. Luis al-Haj, introduction to *Kafaahi*, by Adolf Hitler, trans. Luis Al-Haj (Beirut: Dar Baysan, 1963), 6.

50. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 302.

51. *Ibid.*, 307.

52. Quoted in Nettler, *Past Trials and Present Tribulations*, 7; emphasis added.

to lies. As in the case of the Nazis, the Jihadists' holy war against the Jews has nothing to do with politics or territory, a point made by Salafist Sheikh Muhammad Hussein Yaqoub in an Egyptian television broadcast on 17 January 2009:

If the Jews left Palestine to us, would we start loving them? Absolutely not. The Jews are infidels—not because I say so... but because... Allah who said that they are infidels False They are enemies not because they occupied Palestine. They would have been enemies even if they did not occupy a thing False Our fighting with the Jews is eternal... until not a single Jew remains on the face of the earth. As for you Jews, the Curse of Allah upon you, you pigs of the earth!"⁵³

Here we discover that the Jihadists are not antisemites because they are anti-Zionists; rather, they are anti-Zionists because they are antisemites—another trait that they share with the Nazis.

NAZI AND JIHADIST ANTI-ZIONISM

In 1921 Alfred Rosenberg published his diatribe *Der staatsfeindliche Zionismus* (Zionism: Enemy of the State), in which he argued that Zionism is a Jewish strategy for world domination. Francis Nicosia describes Rosenberg's *Der staatsfeindliche Zionismus* as "a major contribution to the National Socialist position on Zionism" that would continue to shape Hitler's views of the movement.⁵⁴ Rosenberg's theories, says Nicosia, "demonstrate a fundamental ideological hostility and incompatibility between National Socialism and a Zionist movement that was considered to be merely an instrument of a monolithic Jewish world conspiracy False Nevertheless, it appears that Rosenberg did recognize from the beginning the utility of encouraging the Zionist movement in Germany as a means of facilitating the removal of Germany's Jewish population."⁵⁵ The policy here, it must be noted, was strictly utilitarian, as Nicosia indicates; ideologically, the Zionist movement posed an existential threat to the Nazis, as it did to the Jihadists. Therefore neither the Nazis nor the Jihadists could accept that Zionists' stated aim of seeking not just a homeland but also a haven for the Jewish people in a world that itself posed an existential threat to them. Given the antisemites' premise that the Jew is not threatened but rather poses the threat, the ultimate outcome can only be the

53. Muhammad Hussein Yaqoub, "We Will Fight, Defeat, and Annihilate Them," Al-Rahma TV, 17 January 2009, Middle East Media Research Institute, accessed September 6, 2015, <http://memri.org/bin/latestnews.cgi?ID=SD227809>.

54. Francis R. Nicosia, *The Third Reich and the Palestine Question* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2000), 24.

55. *Ibid.*, 24-25.

extermination of the Jews, even if their removal to Zion might be acceptable as a stopgap measure. While perhaps temporarily acceptable to the Nazis, such a measure was from the very beginning quite unacceptable to the Jihadists.

As though writing the script for Islamic Jihadists, in *Mein Kampf* Hitler asserts, “While the Zionists try to make the rest of the world believe that the national consciousness of the Jew finds its satisfaction in the creation of a Palestinian state, the Jews again slyly dupe the dumb Goyim. It doesn’t even enter their heads to build up a Jewish state in Palestine for the purpose of living there; all they want is a central organization for their international world swindle.”⁵⁶ Therefore, “the Jewish state is completely unlimited as to territory.”⁵⁷ The measures taken to oppose the Jewish state must be equally unlimited. Nazi and Jihadist anti-Zionist antisemitism represents a radical perversion of the most ancient, most fundamental evil—murder—into the highest good that, at least among the Jihadists, brings with it the highest reward. In the Jihadist appropriation of God, not only is the prohibition against murder eliminated—it is twisted into a commandment to murder, for the sake of an entry into paradise. Jewish blood is the Jihadist’s ticket to Paradise, as preached by Islamic Jihadist ideologue Abdullah Azzam,⁵⁸ something that one does not find among the Nazis.

Repeating the Nazis’ representation of the Zionist movement, Sayyid Qutb viewed the Jewish state as just a small part of a “universal Zionist conspiracy; indeed, like Hitler, he took Marxism and Zionism to be part of a single conspiracy.”⁵⁹ A familiar image employed by Nazi propagandists to illustrate the Zionist threat shows an octopus with its deadly tentacles wrapped around the entire globe and a Star of David inscribed on its head. The same image can be found among many of the Jihadist illustrations of “world Zionism.”⁶⁰ This image of world Jewry as something monstrous finds its way into many Jihadist texts and documents. When in December 1948 the Muslim Brotherhood was banned in Egypt, for example, al-Banna blamed International Zionism.⁶¹ In 1950 Islamic scholar Abd al-Rahman Sami Ismat wrote, “The Jews and Zionism are like an evil tree. Its root is in New York, its branches all over the world, its leaves the Jews—all of them,

56. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 325.

57. *Ibid.*, 301.

58. Malise Ruthven *A Fury for God: The Islamist Attack on America* (London: Granta, 2004), 206.

59. Nettler, *Past Trials and Present Tribulations*, 55.

60. See, for example, Adam Levnick, “Anti-Semitic Cartoons on Progressive Blogs,” Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 2 September 2010, accessed September 6, 2015, <http://jcpa.org/article/anti-semitic-cartoons-on-progressive-blogs/>.

61. Küntzel, *Jihad and Jew-Hatred*, 54-55.

old and young, male and female, without exception, are its thorny leaves and poisoned thorns, and the poison is swift and deadly.”⁶² Years later Hezbollah’s Al-Manar broadcast system would repeatedly depict “the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a key part of a larger effort to halt the ‘cancer’ of Zionism.”⁶³ Similarly, Article Thirty-Two of the Hamas Charter of Allah states, “After Palestine, the Zionists aspire to expand from the Nile to the Euphrates.” And: “Their plan is embodied in the ‘Protocols of the Elders of Zion.’” And: “The Islamic Resistance Movement considers itself to be the spearhead of the struggle with world Zionism.”⁶⁴ Article Twenty-Two, in fact, states that the Jews are behind every calamity that has befallen humanity.⁶⁵ The Jihadist struggle, therefore, is for the sake of humanity and is carried out in the name of Allah.

THE ASCENT TO THE THRONE OF DIVINE JUDGMENT

The Nazis’ claims about the Jews’ desire to plunge the world into war, their plotting to take over the world, and so on are all too familiar. In the Jihadist discourse, one finds a parallel in the allegations that the Jews have an exterminationist agenda toward the Arabs, that they are behind the 9/11 attacks, that they seek to conquer the world, and that they are consumers of blood. How does this last accusation constitute a projection of Jihadist aims onto the Jews? On 28 November 1971, Jordan’s Prime Minister Wasfi al-Tal was assassinated by the Palestinian group Black September in front of Cairo’s Sheraton Hotel. One of the assassins went over, bent down, and licked his victim’s blood.⁶⁶ And in February 2006 Hamas produced a video of a homicide bomber’s final testimony to the world, in which he declared, “My message to the loathed Jews is that there is no god but Allah [and] we will chase you everywhere! We are a nation that drinks blood, and we know that there is no blood better than the blood of Jews. We will not leave you alone until we have quenched our thirst with your blood, and our

62. Quoted in Bernard Lewis, *Semites and Anti-Semites: An Inquiry into Conflict and Prejudice* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), 15.

63. Avi Jorisch, *Beacon of Hatred: Inside Hizballah’s Al-Manar Television* (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2004), 68.

64. Quoted in Dimitry Kapustyan and Matt Nelson, *The Soul of Terror: The Worldwide Conflict between Islamic Terrorism and the Modern World* (Washington, DC: International Affairs Press, 2007), 147-48.

65. *Ibid.*, 139-40.

66. See Barry Rubin, *Revolution Until Victory?: The Politics and History of the PLO* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), 37-38. Black September was formed in 1970 to avenge the Jordanian killing of several thousand Palestinians in September 1970.

children's thirst with your blood."⁶⁷ This most radical appropriation of the soul of the other person—the soul that is in the blood—is characteristic of the Jihadists' radical appropriation of God, as they assume the throne of divine judgment.

Jihadism not only legitimizes spilling Jewish blood—it sanctifies it. This undermining of the divine, absolute prohibition against murder is very often a defining feature of antisemitism, inasmuch as the antisemite's project, whether Nazi or Jihadist, is often to be as God, not only knowing but determining good and evil. According to the Jewish teaching that both the Nazi and the Jihadist antisemite would obliterate, we are to read the Ten Commandments not from top to bottom but from right to left (in Hebrew): "I am God" means "Thou shalt not murder" (see, for example, the Midrash Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael, Bachodesh 8). Because the Jews have been singled out for the task of unmasking false gods, the desire to be as God is a desire to kill the Jews, which is the deepest desire of the antisemite. The dynamic of Jew hatred, moreover, works in two directions, with each fueling the other: in order to ascend to the divine throne of judgment, one must eliminate the divine prohibition against murder, and in order to eliminate the divine prohibition, one must eclipse, appropriate, or otherwise eliminate God. The elimination of God amounts to the elimination of any absolute limiting principle that might curb one's actions. The crimes of the Nazis, therefore, were not unimaginable but everything imaginable, for their actions were limited only by their imagination and their will. There was no measure too extreme: it was impossible to go too far, to be too brutal, or to murder too many Jews. Just the opposite: the principle that guided them in their actions was "Thou shalt murder every Jew." For this reason, as Fackenheim has maintained, murder was not a byproduct of National Socialism—it was its very essence.⁶⁸ Why? Because antisemitism was its very essence, as it is the essence of Islamic Jihadism.

Thus "Jihad and Jew-hatred belong together," Matthias Küntzel observes.⁶⁹ Elsewhere Küntzel notes another important parallel between National Socialism and Islamic Jihadism: "Just like National Socialism was propelled by a utopia which advocated salvation through destruction, Islamism is propelled forward by a similar utopia. In both cases, it is the distorted image of a perceived enemy which provides the perpetrator with his own identity. In both cases, the annihilation of evil is considered to be

67. Itamar Marcus and Barbara Cook, " Hamas Video: 'We will drink the blood of the Jews,'" Palestine Media Watch, 14 February 2006, accessed September 6, 2015, <http://www.pmw.org.il/latest%20bulletins%20new.htm#b140206>.

68. Emil L. Fackenheim, *The Jewish Return into History* (New York: Schocken Books, 1978), 246.

69. Küntzel, *Jihad and Jew-Hatred*, 149.

the precondition for the realization of an idealized dream of homogeneity. In both cases this evil is projected onto ‘the Jew.’”⁷⁰ As we have seen, the Jihadist resemblance to National Socialism that Küntzel notes is not accidental.

In both instances it is clear that each shares with the other, Nazis and Jihadists, an essentially exterminationist Jew hatred. Robert Wistrich sums up very well a crucial point to be made about Islamic Jihadism and the legacy of Nazi antisemitism:

The Muslim fundamentalists—like the Nazis before and during the Shoah—rant against the ‘anonymous powers’ of globalization and the plutocratic West. They (falsely) claim to speak for frustrated, underprivileged, and impoverished masses betrayed by more traditional Arab and Muslim ruling elites. Anti-Semitic conspiracy theories lie at the very heart of the Muslim fundamentalist and Arab nationalist world view today—linking together plutocratic finance, international freemasonry, secularism, Zionism, and communism as dark occult forces led by the giant octopus of international Jewry. This mythical structure of thought is in many ways virtually identical with Nazi anti-Semitism. Fundamentalist Islam has the same totalitarian, pseudo-messianic aspiration to world hegemony as German Nazism.⁷¹

And so the pattern of modern—or perhaps anti-modern—antisemitism repeats itself. Eclipsing God, the Nazis eclipsed the absolute obligation imposed from beyond, so that the will from within posed the only limits to their actions. Appropriating God, the Jihadists appropriate the authority to impose from beyond what they have determined to be the will of Allah, which is not a matter of human will but an absolute obligation. What makes the Jihadist embrace of the Nazi legacy an embrace of antisemitism—and not just an affirmation of fascism or totalitarianism—is this appropriation of God, as when Hamas, for example, deems its charter to be the Charter of Allah or when Hezbollah declares itself to be a “‘clearinghouse for mankind,’ where those who will be admitted into paradise are separated from those destined for hell.”⁷² For the elimination of God through such an appropriation is in the end a defining feature of antisemitism itself, at least in its religious, political, and ideological manifestations. Because the Jews are the most ancient, most enduring witnesses of the first utterance at Mount Sinai—“I am God” (Exodus 20:2)—the Jihadist who would ascend to the throne of God must eliminate the Jews. There lies the key to the

70. Küntzel, “National Socialism and Anti-Semitism in the Arab World.”

71. Robert S. Wistrich, “Islamic Judeophobia: An Existential Threat,” in *Muhammad’s Monsters: A Comprehensive Guide to Radical Islam for Western Audiences*, ed. David Bukay (Green Forest, AR: Balfour Books, 2004), 196.

72. Taheri, *Holy Terror*, 87.

exterminationist antisemitism that the Jihadists have inherited from the Nazis.

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